

# High Ideals

THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA

*deep*  
V. 28  
#4



Don't jump into these topics blindly

**PLAN AHEAD**

*Read the Presentation Pointers carefully*

**PLAN AHEAD**

Echoes (p. 48) is supplementary

**PLAN AHEAD**



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ELEANOR MORA  
Editorial

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## *Angel Voices Ever Singing*

*this topic can be used at two different times*

- near the Feast of St. Michael and All the Angels*
- during the Christmas Season*

**"H**OW do you speak to an angel?" asks a tune recently popular among the disc-jockey set. The song gives one a certain impression of the nature of celestial beings. It talks of clouds and whispers and wings, and it leaves one up in the air.

But did the same thoughts come into your mind when angels were mentioned in the two Psalms read a few minutes ago, or when you sang, "Angel voices, ever singing"? What's the difference? Are there different kinds of angels?

If you are an average young teen-ager, you probably have never given much serious thought to angels, and those few thoughts have no doubt been colored by the Christmas card, popular song, cartoon impressions left on your mind. That's to be expected. People today don't think or read or hear too much about real angels unless they are studying the Bible. Except for one special day in the church year.

### HONORING ANGELS

The Lutheran church observes September 29 as the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels. Look on your church year calendar: you'll see that it is a red-letter day. The history of this special day dates back to the fifth century, A.D. Sometime around the year 450 A.D. the Feast of St. Michael was started in the Roman Catholic Church. It seems the early church fathers realized that there were too many people to whom they should give special worship, so all the angels in heaven were to be worshipped on one special day.

At about this time, a church of St. Michael's, built upon a hill outside Rome, was dedicated on St. Michael's Day. Then, because St. Michael is known as a Great Prince among angels, it soon became popular to observe the Feast of St. Michael and the Feast of All Angels on the same day.

In King Ethelrod's reign in England



about 1019 A.D., the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels was preceded by a fast of three days during which the devout went to church in procession bare-footed.

Martin Luther wanted to continue the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels so that the doctrine concerning angels might be preached upon and the congregation be taught to give thanks to God for their ministry. Luther knew that there were a lot of fables and superstitions about angels and that people are easily confused if not properly taught.

### WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

So we come back to the question, "What are we to believe about angels?" Let's find out from One who knows!

Angels appeared often in Jesus' life. Do you recall some of the occasions? (Check in the gospel accounts for your own satisfaction.) Angels were God's messengers who announced the birth of the Bethlehem-born Babe; they ministered to him during his temptation in the wilderness; they comforted him in his agony in the garden of Gethsemane; they watched at his sepulchre.

Using our Bibles, let us read some of the things Jesus tells us about angels. We can learn where they live by reading Matthew 18:10, Luke 12:8, 9 and John 1:51. Some say that angels are superior to men, but Jesus says that the righteous man shall be equal to angels in the world to come (Luke 20:36).

The Hebrews who lived many generations before Jesus came to earth talked about only a few angels; but Jesus implies that they are very numerous. (Read Matthew 26:53).

Do you think there are bad angels as well as good angels? (Read Matthew 25:41.)

One of the nicest things we learn from Jesus about angels is that there are guardians angels of children. (Matthew 18:10.)

### DIFFERING IDEAS

There were times when Jesus' teaching differed from the traditional ideas and practices of the Hebrews. (See Mat-

by H. RAYMOND JONES

thew 5:17-48 for a good example). His teaching about angels was not exactly the same as what earlier people believed. In Old Testament times, angels were considered to be more active among men—they guided men in their travels and actions (*Exodus* 23:21; *Genesis* 24:7, 40; 1 *Kings* 13:18; 2 *Kings* 1:3, 15); they report to God what goes on upon the earth (*Job* 1:6, 2:1); and they protect men (*Psalms* 34:8, 91:11).

From Jesus we learn that it is not necessary for angels to speak to men for God. God speaks directly to us through Christ or the Holy Spirit.

In Old Testament writings, angels are represented as appearing in human form and having many human characteristics. Read for yourself how they speak (1 *Kings* 19:5), they eat (*Genesis* 18:8), they possess wisdom, they have imperfections (*Job* 4:18). They can also become invisible (*Psalms* 104:4) and they can fly (*Isaiah* 6:5).

The Apostle Paul wrote about angels, and he also warned us against worshipping them. (See *Colossians* 2:18.)

### WHAT THEY DO

The prayer Collect for the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels (See page 123 of the new *Service Book and Hymnal*) asks that the angels will help us as they help in heaven. In the Holy Communion service, one prayer is concluded, "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name . . ." These two prayers give a hint about what angels do. It is said that the ministry of angels may be divided into two parts, that of praising God, and that of executing His commands.

Thus on this day, the angels and Michael their leader are honored because of their service and love to God and man.

Michael (the name means "who is like God?") is called the Great Prince, or the Prince of Wisdom. According to

Jewish writers, he is superior to Gabriel. We can read about him in Daniel 10:13-21 and again in Revelation 12:7-12. He is said to represent mercy and is one of the five principal angel-chiefs. From these accounts, he is thought of as a helper of Christian soldiers in war, as the one who leads the soul to God after death and as the angel who keeps off the attacks of the Devil.

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

HYMN 424 CSB "God Himself is Present"

RESPONSIVE READING Psalm 148

POEM HYMN 253 in CSB, vs. 1, 2, 3, (have read)

HYMN 240 CSB "Angel Voices, Ever Singing"

SCRIPTURE Psalm 91

TOPIC AND DISCUSSION

**PRAYER** We give thanks unto Thee, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast this day so graciously protected us, and we beseech Thee to forgive us all our sins, and the wrong which we have done, and by Thy great mercy defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night. Into Thy hands we commend our bodies and souls, and all that is ours. Let Thy holy angel have charge concerning us, that the wicked one have no power over us. Amen.

OFFERING

HYMN 467 CSB, "Saviour, Breathe an Evening Blessing

The subject matter for this topic offers all kinds of possibilities for clever publicity to gain interest. Be creative in devising ways to get the leaguers thinking on the subject prior to the meeting. Be sure that everyone will have a Bible during the meeting. Also provide copies of any hymnals you may want to use.

Two or three leaguers may be asked to check in Bible concordances and dictionaries for references to angels.

### DISCUSSION

There probably are different grades of angels in heaven, having greater or lesser positions. Michael must be great for he is spoken of as "prince," "archangel," "leader of God's host."

You might like to put the various types of angels in the order you think most important

When we think of angels and heaven too often we are thinking in terms of things unseen and eternal—conditions that exist only after we die. Yet, what we have just read about the acts and ministrations of angels among men should help us to realize that there is much of the eternal that exists and happens right now . . . to us . . . here . . . every day!

from the jobs they were given as we read them in the Bible.

**Cherubim** were set by God to guard Eden and Adam and Eve were put out. (See Genesis 3:24; Psalm 18:10; Psalm 80:1; Psalm 99:1)

**Seraphim**, with six wings, appeared to Isaiah (Isaiah 6:2, 3)

**Michael** was one of the chief princes. (Daniel 10:13; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7)

**The Angels of Michael** (See Revelation 12:7) Where do the angels that came to Jesus battle long?

What about the angels of children before God? (Matthew 18:10)

**Gabriel**, stands in the presence of God. (Luke 1:19)

Now which of these above angels is greatest? Can they be "rated"?

Will we be angels when we go to heaven or is there a difference between men and angels? In Genesis 1:26 (where God is talking to someone else, probably Christ) He says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The Psalmist says, "Thou hast made him little less than God." And the writer to the Hebrews quotes this as, "Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels." (Hebrews 2:7) In Luke 20:36, Jesus makes a difference between people who go to heaven and angels.

Look up hymns that mention angels and list different ideas about them.

**NOTE:** The story of Michael and the dragon in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation of John needs some explanation. We must realize that it was written at the end of the First Century A.D., when the Christians were being persecuted. The terms are symbolic—like codes used today. The message it brings is one of faith, hope and courage. The imaginative story is told to assure Christian believers that the struggle through which they are going had its origin in heaven and that because heavenly forces have already been victorious (Michael over Satan), they, too, shall triumph.



# TO CHEAT OR NOT TO CHEAT

by MIRIAM SHEALY LOGAN

**LEADER:** Today we are going to discuss cheating in an effort to determine what it is, why it's done, and what effect it has on us. We will limit our discussion to cheating done in connection with school work. First of all, let's list on the blackboard all the definitions you would give to cheating.

*(Time for discussion and definitions from group)*

**LEADER:** Here are some statements that I have heard young people make about cheating.

"Cheating is copying someone else's paper."

"Cheating is stealing someone else's work."

"Cheating is giving someone the impression that you know more than you actually do."

"Cheating is accepting credit for work you did not do."

"Cheating is deceiving."

All of the definitions given point out some aspect of cheating. Most of us have had experiences with cheating in school in one way or another. If we ourselves have not cheated, we probably have seen classmates who



have. Let us share some of these experiences with one another so that we may better determine what is being done and why.

**SHIRLEY:** What is done by students who cheat varies from person to person and also depends a great deal on the situation. The kind of help gotten depends on the kind of work the teacher has asked for. A student may find a needed answer in his textbook or from an unsuspecting neighbor or he may involve other classmates by seeking and receiving their help in or out of class.

**LEADER:** Of course, it is not wrong in itself to give or receive help in or out of class. It comes under the category of cheating when the help given or received is used dishonestly. The next question we want to discuss is why it is done.

**DICK:** I cheated in algebra last year because I was not making the grades that I wanted to make. After being on the honor roll for two years, it would have been a great disappointment to my parents and some of my teachers had I not made it. It would have been a blow to my pride, too.

**JOHN:** One of my subjects is very boring. I do not like to study it, but I know I must pass in order to graduate from school. If I do not pass it, I shall have to take it again next year. Sure hope I never have to sit through that class twice. It would be expensive for my parents, too.

**JANE:** I find it hard to find enough time to study my lessons. There are basketball games to go to and club meetings to attend. Sometimes I have not had time to prepare for class.

**LEADER:** Basically the reasons you have given are rather typical of underlying causes for cheating. Jealousy of friends making better grades, fear of punishment at home, fear of ridicule and loss of prestige in one's group, and fear of having to repeat a class in a group of younger people are also causes for being tempted to cheat. Here is an important question for us to think seriously about: Is it all right for cheating to go on in school or should it stop?

**DICK:** I used to think that as long as no one was involved but the person who was cheating that it did not matter. Now I see that it affects the whole class even when only one person cheats. A teacher cannot grade the work of his or her students fairly, and students fail to get the credit they deserve for the work they have done. Fellow classmates may be influenced by the example set by those who do not think that cheating is wrong. Then the standards of right and wrong for the class drop far below the ideal.

**JANE:** It hurts the person who cheats more than anyone else. In school there are technical and practical things that students need to learn. When a person fails to acquire those skills and experiences offered in the course of his studies, he may find immediate relief but he may never have the opportunity to learn them again. This may be a serious loss to him in the future. It may keep him from doing further study in a specialized field that he may become vitally interested in or it may keep him from getting a job that he wants and needs. Some of the things we are learning now may seem unnecessary but later we may find out how important they were for us.



**JOHN:** All of us need to have good study habits. The self-discipline needed to study for long periods of time is something learned gradually. It is a trait that would be helpful for us to have now and would be very helpful to those who plan to enter college and, perhaps later, graduate school. We learn good habits gradually and by practicing them.

**SHIRLEY:** Learning to do things that we do not want to do now but are required to do will make it easier for us to accept difficult and unpleasant responsibilities as adults. Escaping our present responsibilities by cheating is detrimental to our character. The recognition and merits we wish to gain by cheating become valueless when we lose our own self-respect and a good reputation because of our dishonesty.

Society will not approve of us. If dishonesty were to become a common thing in our land, the good institutions of our society would be torn down. There would no longer be mutual confidence and trust in the home between parents and children. Witnesses in our courts would no longer be respected as reliable. Buying and selling on credit would have to stop. Dishonesty is a liability to the community and to our society.

**LEADER:** There is still one thing that we have not mentioned that ought to be considered as we decide where we are going to stand on the question of cheating. Basically, how do we know what is right or wrong?

**DICK:** In the Bible we find how God has shown people in the past what is right and wrong. I did some research before coming here today and this is what I found. The Israelites were told to be honest. "You shall not steal" is the seventh commandment (Exodus 20:15). In Ezekiel 22:12-15 we read: "... you have forgotten me, says the Lord God. Behold, therefore, I strike my hands together at the dishonest gain which you have made ..."

He wants us always to bear the truth. "Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right; for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips." (Proverbs 8:6-7) God's very nature is that of truth. Jesus said of himself, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14: 62) John wrote that Jesus was full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

If cheating is to stop in school, we must feel that it depends on each of us. If we are convinced that it is wrong, we will not engage in it ourselves nor aid others in doing so. In the spirit of love and friendship we can help our friends see that it is harmful. As young people conscious that we have been called to be the children of God, we shall be fulfilling our Christian vocation to love and obey Him in all we do and wherever we are.

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

You may wish to give your Luther League room a schoolroom atmosphere for this program. If so, let the part designated leader be the teacher's part and plan to have all the other leaguers sit as students in a classroom. Those taking part on the program may do so from where they are sitting.

Here are some suggested properties: a blackboard; leader's (or teacher's) table and chair.

A novel idea for starting the session would be for the teacher to ring a bell to call the class to order. After that she could call on the

student responsible for the devotions for the day.

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP

SCRIPTURE James 1:22-25

PRAYER HYMN 215 (CYH)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER (read by devotional leader)

We give Thee but Thine own,  
Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

Amen



# THE U.L.C.A. HELPS THOSE WITH NEEDS

by ELIZABETH SHEALY

**LEADER:** Christ told His followers to go into all the world to teach, preach and heal. We are familiar with the way in which the local congregation preaches. We have pastors. We think of Sunday school, Luther League, weekday church school, released time and so on. We know that the Church teaches. But how does it heal?

Tonight we are thinking in terms of how the Church of Christ heals the sickness of man. Some of the sickness is that of the body. Some is loneliness. Some is mental. Some is lack of love. We are thinking here of the way in which the Church shows its love and concern for people who need special help.

*(Here is introduced the method of presentation of the visits to various social institutions and agencies)*

Dr. Harold Haas, who is the first person you will hear talking when we turn on our radio, is the Executive Secretary of the Board of Social Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America. His office is at church headquarters in New York.

**VOICE OF DR. HAAS:** Good evening, radio audience. It's good to find you tuning in. Wish we had TV so you could see too. But the Church still finds radio meets its budget better than TV! I want to take you on a visit which means that we will move to many different places. You will be hearing from people who have needs. And notice I didn't say "needy people." When we say "needy people" we are prone to think of those who don't have too much money. All of us have needs and problems but not all of us know what to do to help ourselves. So the Church helps. The Church is trying to help people help themselves with their problems. Listen and you'll hear some of the stories of people with needs!

First we will call in a Senior Citizen. This is someone who is well over 65 or retirement age. And we are told that there are 14,000,000 of these people in the U.S.A. Shall we tell them they are too old? Listen—

**SENIOR CITIZEN:** My, I wish I could see you instead of talking into this microphone! But let me get on with my story. I'm a member of a group of people who spend a lot of time together. We play together, work together, take trips together, make things together and in general have a wonderful time together. I never had time to do much of this before. I was too busy raising my nine children and helping my husband get to work on time. Now he's retired and comes to Senior Citizens with me. But let me tell you my story.



## a topic concerning institutions of the church

One of the members of our group whom I'll call Katherine nearly didn't get to be a member. We were making up a list of those in the congregation and community whom we'd ask to become members of the group we were starting at our church and someone suggested Katherine. And shame on me, I shook my head and said "No." Why I'd even walk across the street to keep from speaking to her. She was nothing but an old grouch! But someone showed his love for God better than I and said, "So she is a grouch. But she is still a child of God and He loves her. Maybe we can too."

Katherine came and loved it. In a month she was life of the party. We learned her story. Katherine's husband had been ill for five years and she nursed him. During that time her neighbors moved and forgot to call on her. Katherine and her husband never had been active in the church so the church kinda forgot them. (Isn't it a shame that it happens like that sometimes?) After Katherine's husband died, she grieved so for him that she didn't want to see anyone and she got sour on everybody. Just look what a little love did for Katherine.

My time's up. But any of you out there that have older people in your midst had better think about helping them be happy and useful in their old age! Your group work agency or your congregation can help you.

**DR. HAAS:** Thank you, Mrs. Senior Citizen. You represent about 500 others like you who are being served in one of our Lutheran agencies. And this agency is one of many around the country. Still there are not enough!

Now let's jump to the younger people. Why not call in a camp director? Come in, camp director.

**CAMP DIRECTOR:** Hi there! We've still got some vacancies at our camp. But you'd better hurry if you want to spend two weeks with us on our 200 acre camp and swim in our 7½ acre lake. You and about 75 other boys and girls like you from 7-12 will really live in the woods and camp. And this is all a part of the Church's program for its people.

Our camp is not a Bible School in the country but we do talk about God a lot and we make God a part of the camper's life. Let me tell you about two sisters who came to our camp. We saw on the application that one sister didn't hear well. We figured we could handle that. But the other campers didn't know this. And so we had a problem!

All went well until we began to sing. Karen was deaf. There was nothing wrong with the vocal cords. But she couldn't hear to learn to talk. She could read lips but she could speak only in a monotone. Of course this amused the little ones.

I spoke to one of the girls in Karen's cabin and got a reply, "We're laughing because Karen sounds so funny." Perfectly natural for an 8-year-old. But when I suggested that Karen had been born without being able to hear, the little girl immediately caught the point. "I shouldn't laugh at what God has made. Karen can't help it, can she? I must tell all the others. We've gotta show her that we love her—even though she's different."

I tell you, that little girl preached a sermon of love and understanding, didn't she? Couldn't we remove a lot of prejudiced thoughts if we just

remembered that God made each of us just as we are? See why I think camp is important? And what I mean by helping children live what they say when they tell God they love him?

**DR. HAAS:** Karen and her sister were two of 735 campers who went to camps conducted by welfare agencies of our Church. This doesn't include the camps which have classes and study books.

And while we're talking about youngsters, let's take a glimpse at the children's homes of the Church. Come in Children's Home. (*Pause*) Come in Children's Home. (*Pause*) Come in Children's Home. Are you there?

**CHILDREN'S HOMES:** I was late coming in, Dr. Haas, because I wanted to impress upon people that there aren't too many of us in children's homes anymore. I want them to know that there are only 23 homes which are supported by the ULCA and the total number of children services in agencies that have only casework is 7. It is hard for us to grow up normally when there are so many of us together and there is no one whom we can think of as a parent. Many of us do have either a mother or father still living but we stay in a home because they cannot care for us properly by themselves. But many homes today are helping to find foster homes for children. Many families who feel that they have enough love to share with other children are asking the Church foster home agencies to let them keep children and treat them as they treat their own children.

In this way, children who have only one parent in the home, or even no parent, may live in a family and be a part of a family. My little sister is in such a home and I go to see her frequently. The Church knows that I should keep in touch with Sis. I myself couldn't go to a foster home because I was older and nearly ready to leave the home. You see, I'm in college and I want to finish. But I'm so glad Sis is living in a family and that there is someone whom she can call father and mother. I didn't have that.

I'd also like to tell you about a different kind of children's home which I heard about recently. It's a home that takes care of children whose parents have mistreated them, or have deserted them, or are in prison for breaking the law, or are in the hospital. The welfare department and the courts have to do something with the children, if something happens to the parents. So they are put into a home with other children until the case worker from the courts or the welfare department can find a foster home or help the mother and father to learn to take care of their children. Sometimes it is only until the mother gets well or the father is back on the job. I think it is wonderful that the Church does this.

**DR. HAAS:** Thank you, Children's Homes. You certainly make us realize that the work we do with children is changing. And since you told us about some special homes, I'd like you out in radio land to hear from another special type of assistance the Church gives. It is called an Industrial Mission. Does anyone have any idea on the subject? Come in Pittsburgh.

**INDUSTRIAL MISSION:** I'm a person whom the Industrial Mission of the Lutheran Church is helping. There are a number of us who live and work here at a nice building that is something like a YMCA. We can't do many different kinds of work but we are happy in doing the things we can do. It makes us feel that we are worthwhile and can take care of ourselves. Some of us operate paper cutting machines for firms which need a lot of scrap paper for shipping things. Some of us sweep floors in offices after the people go home. We can't do much that requires thinking because



we just don't have enough grey matter for that. I used to feel so badly that I couldn't do the things the other fellows back home did. I was ashamed because I could only read like a second grader when I was 12. But since I came here I learned that God still loves me and that there are things I can do. The other fellows who live with me are just like me and we like to be with each other. You see, I'm 26 now, and for the first time in my life, I've been able to earn some money. How proud I am.

There are other kinds of men here too. Some of them have lost their jobs in industry because they drank too much. Others are just bums. But our director and the social worker are good guys. They don't care how dirty the people are when they come, or how drunk they are. The men are greeted and made comfortable. When they are rested, warm and fed, someone talks to them. And before you know it, they are ready to go back to work. Many of them keep on living here and start paying room rent. Others go back home and start work again. This is a wonderful place and we know that the people who help us here love God and us. They don't mind that we are not too bright or that we are sick or dirty or broke.

**DR. HAAS:** This Industrial Mission is just for men. I'm proud to be a part of a Church which offers help to a person regardless of who or what he is, knowing God loves all people. But let's move on to another type of work the Church does. Come in hospital. Calling Lankenau. Calling Lankenau!

**LANKENAU:** This is one of the hospitals of the Lutheran Church. It is located in Philadelphia and I am so happy to be a nurse here. This beautiful building really doesn't look like a hospital. The rooms are cheerful and the lobbies are wide and full of plants and pictures and easy chairs. And the people who work here are wonderful. I guess the thing I like about it most is the friendly way in which the patient is greeted when he comes in. And before one has time to feel strange, here comes a friendly visitor to tell the patient about the hospital. The Church feels that people get well faster if they are happy and so it provides a hospital to take care of not only the illnesses and injuries to the physical body, but also it provides persons who talk to the patients about our God and His love. This hospital happens to be near a deaconess home so many of the deaconesses who are becoming nurses work here as part of their training. All hospitals of the Church don't have this though.

And I want to tell you of another kind of hospital that the Church has. It is a hospital where there is a mental health clinic. Some people need a psychiatrist to help them with their problems. So the Church provides this.

I know of a young man who was all mixed up. While he was in service he became ill and had to go to the hospital for several years. His wife decided she did not love her husband and that she didn't want a sick husband anyway. So she sued for a divorce and got it. When the young man got out of the hospital, he found he didn't have a wife—he had no job—he had no money saved up because he hadn't worked for two years—his parents were dead. He didn't know what to do. He got all mixed up in his thinking. Finally a pastor suggested that he needed help. So he went to the Lutheran Medical Center and trained people there are helping him understand his troubles and become happy. Now he has a job and is much better. I'm so glad Lutherans are ready to help people with problems.

**DR. HAAS:** We must hasten on. We could visit so many more places. But I am calling in only two more. One is a home for older people. (Notice I didn't say "Old People's Home.") And one is a teen age group in a local con-

gregation. Come in, Home for Older People.

**OLDER PEOPLE:** How glad I am that you didn't call us *old people*. I'm not old—at least I don't feel old. Maybe by the calendar 74 is old, but I think those people whom I know who are 90 are the old ones. Just because I'm retired and don't go to work every day, I am not old. I'm still useful.

But I didn't always feel this way. I used to be an active member of my home congregation and when I stopped teaching Sunday School they gave me a present and thanked me and then tried to forget me. But I didn't let them. I came to Sunday School anyway and I know I worried the teachers because they were doing things differently from the way I had done them. Finally, I made myself ill because I didn't have enough to do and I worried all the time. I came to this home and felt that I'd only be carried out. I'd never leave under my own steam. But I soon learned! I'd not been in the home an hour before I'd had five visitors. And they were all so happy. And I was a grouch. They were all busy making things for their grandchildren or planning a trip to a movie! And they were older than I!

First thing you know, I discovered I wasn't really sick, I just thought I was. Gradually, I began to take an interest in the things the people did. I began to fix up my room and what a happy day it was when I left the home for my first bus trip by myself! Never thought I'd do that. Before long I was feeling so good that I talked to the caseworker at the home. He suggested that I might like to go back and live near my own church and friends. This scared me until I found out that he would keep in touch with me every week. He suggested some things I could do. He even talked to the Church and they found a job that I could do. I was useful again!

If I want to go back to the home if I get sick, I can just call. If I get too feeble to live alone, I can go back and live with eight others in a house. And I'll do all the dusting as my part of the living arrangements. Am I glad I followed my pastor's advice and made contact with that home for older people. I hear that some homes are not like this and that people just sit all day and wait for someone to come to see them. I hope that soon they'll all learn that older people like me don't have to go to homes for older people. They can stay right where they are and just be in contact with a home. I'm a useful, happy 74. Hope I live to be 95!

**DR. HAAS:** That man is a great grandfather. Still he is young! The Church is just learning that older people are people too. They need to be useful, they need to have people love them, they need to be able to work even though they have to slow down. But let's quickly call in a group work agency and see what the story is.

**GROUP WORK AGENCY:** Hi there! I'm a teenager. And I'm a Luther Leaguer in a small league. We have been having a time. Our group is so small and there just weren't any others to come. One night when we were talking about our small group, pastor suggested that maybe we should invite others to come in with us. Immediately we thought about that gang we'd seen on the street corner when we came in. Did pastor mean those creeps? Why they didn't even know how to dress neatly. And the language they used! We just couldn't have them mixing with us! Pastor suggested that we invite the staff member of the group work agency of our church to come and discuss the situation with us. We'd never heard of a group worker but we were game for anything the pastor suggested.

The group worker surprised us all. She asked us what we wanted to do most. And we thought she was going to tell us all the answers! Instead



she just asked questions and made comments and suggestions and let us talk. She agreed with us that the young people—yes, we got to calling them that instead of creeps—were like they were because they were not part of a group like ours. We even found ourselves suggesting that we could help them become like us! We agreed that they might not like Luther League immediately but that we had to start somewhere. First step was to act friendly toward them instead of ignoring them as we passed by. Then we'd invite them to an open house at the church and have a fun night with them. We'd invite them on our picnics for the summer and we'd visit them in their homes, talk to them and let them know us.

Do you know what? Those young people aren't creeps. We just thought they were. We just didn't know them. Because they looked different we didn't like them. When we knew them better, they were loads of fun. And they learned to like us too. Some of them began to come to league on Sunday nights and we've tripled our attendance.

The group worker hasn't stopped yet. She is working with us in leading the planning for our programs. She doesn't tell us. She just guides us and makes us think by the questions she asks. We're really having fun. I didn't know Luther League could be such fun. But most of all I've learned that we have to squint our eyes when we see strangers. When we do this all people look alike. And they are, really. All of us are children of God. Some of us just don't know it yet.

Whew! I'm beginning to sound preachy. But I'm so glad that the group worker from the church agency is helping us appreciate other people and realize that we have a responsibility to help people who have needs. I understand she is helping organize teenage centers all over the city in congregations. There are also groups for children who live in crowded apartment houses, discussion groups for parents, and work with all sorts of groups. I like the idea and what she does. Maybe I can be a social worker . . . Hmmmmm.

**DR. HAAS:** Many larger cities and towns have crowded communities where settlement houses or community centers are necessary. Here the children come in to play, and learn to work and plan together; clinics of various sorts are held; parents come in for help with the children's problems and a full program of activity is carried on year round. Let's hear from one such group member.

**MEMBER OF A COMMUNITY CENTER:** I wish you could see what I've been doing. I've been in my group meeting at the community center. Did we ever have fun! Our leader had taken us out walking last week over near the river. I've lived five blocks from the river all my life, but mother was afraid to let me go over there by myself. We had the nicest time talking about the boats on the river and watching the sun set. Just as we started to leave—and I didn't want to go because the sky was beginning to look so pretty—our leader stopped us and pointed to all the birds flying near the big bridge. There must have been hundreds of them! Our leader told us that those birds live under the bridge and that every night they come back there to sleep. We stood and watched for a while and finally all the birds had gone under the bridge. When I asked Sally—she's my leader—if they lived there all the time, she said they did. And I had never seen them before! I wondered why but then I found out that from my block, I couldn't see the bridge because of the tall houses. And I couldn't see the sunset either! I was really missing a lot. That was last week.

Today we talked about our walk. Since it was raining, Sally suggested

that we might want to tell what we remembered best about the trip.

**DR. HAAS:** Much of the work described to you is done by social workers. Social workers are needed by our church. Caseworkers who work with individuals with problems, group workers who work with groups so that they may be more democratic and outreaching, psychiatrists, doctors, nurses and the like are needed. If anyone is interested in knowing more about the job you can do in social work in the Lutheran Church, write me. Your pastor has my address at the ULCA church house in New York City.

Thanks for your attention. Next time you visit the church institution in your vicinity, try to see if the Church is considering the problem of each person there. Likely it is. But you'll love finding out how!

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

This script is designed for an informal presentation. There should be at least three persons taking part in addition to the leader who will introduce the program and describe the method of presentation. It is suggested that there be a table set in the front of the room with a radio on it. At the time the leader finishes his introduction, the radio is snapped on and the "Voice of Dr. Haas" comes on. The readers—Dr. Haas, one male voice, and one female—should come from the back of the room. Voices may be disguised to suit the person speaking. The fewer number of people who have to speak in this program, the better. It is even more effective if the reader is familiar with the script so that thoughts can be told rather than read.

A final visit could be made to the institution or agency nearest your local group. A letter to the director or a conversation with your pastor could tell you something of that. You could write your own visit. The **ULCA YEARBOOK** which each pastor has will be valuable to you in preparation. The section on welfare is the specially useful part.

## WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

Since the theme of the program is the service of the Church to others, it would be well to think not only in terms of **how** the Church serves, but also **whom** it serves and **why**. The **how** of the service is illustrated in the body of the discussion. The **who** and the **why** could be the center of the devotions.

For Scripture background the story of Peter's vision in the Acts 10 would be helpful, especially sections 25-29 and 34 and 35. The Revised Standard Version gives a good insight into the matter of **who** is served. Christ's illustration of His second coming when he recalls how people served others in Matthew 25:31-40 gives good background for the answer to **why** the church serves.

Hymns suitable for the theme are ones such as "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life,"

"O God of Mercy, God of Might," and "We Give Thee But Thine Own." These are all found in the **Christian Youth Hymnal**.

The prayer should be written by a member of the group be free prayer, or guided prayer. It should contain petitions for the institution and agencies of the Church in general, and also name those within the area of the congregation's support. Some thought should be given to the idea that each person may serve others through showing interest in others.

## FOR YOUR THOUGHT

There are ways each individual can help others to feel that they are useful. What can members of an intermediate Luther League do to make others not of their group feel important?

What is the attitude of young people toward adults who are retired?

Can the Church expect the welfare and governmental agencies to care for the more than 14,000,000 retired people in the country? What is the responsibility of the church, other than providing homes for them? What type of program would you take to a home for old people? Be specific.

## RESOURCES

The **ULCA Yearbook** gives a good statistical report of the work the church is doing in welfare. A copy of this is useful to the leader.

A filmstrip developed by the Board of High Education of the ULCA tells the story of young people who work for the Church all summer in church related camps, agencies and institutions. This would be an interesting sidelight but not a full program.

It is possible that the Church agency in your vicinity has a set of slides or picture material which would be interesting for your group. Many agencies have pictured annual reports which would be sent you in reply to a card request. Excellent posters could be a visual aid with the script.



## GETTING TO KNOW LUTHER

THE church door closed with a bang behind Jane and Bill.

"That's the way our meeting ended tonight—" said Jane, obviously pleased with herself, "with a bang." She had a right to be pleased. The topic had gone well, everyone had participated, and she had received a warm smile from the pastor when the meeting was over.

Strangely, Bill didn't share her enthusiasm, and finally, with curiosity, Jane blurted out, "Didn't you like our meeting tonight, Bill?"

Bill frowned and said, "I'm sorry, Jane, I sure did enjoy it. But I guess you missed one thing that happened: I was given the assignment for next week. But it's too late to do a good job, and a tough subject to prepare. Brother, what they gave me: the life of Martin Luther," and Bill groaned for what must have been the sixth time.



"Sure, I know Martin Luther was a great man," Bill continued, "and I know he had a lot to do with the Lutheran Church and the Reformation and all that sort of thing. But I still don't really know him, other than some dates I saw in the book Pastor Brown gave me. I sure wish they had given me a different subject."

Jane smiled slyly at Bill and said, "Well, why don't you try to get to know him?"

Bill looked disgusted. "Oh sure," he agreed, "just like that—a great idea. Just how do you get to know someone like that who lived four hundred years ago?"

And then Jane grew a bit more serious as ideas began to come to her. "Well, he must have been a boy at one time. He must have played some games. He must have had a father and a mother. I wonder what he would eat at lunch—where he went to school—what he learned in school. In fact—how he ever got mixed up in the Reformation anyway."

And then Bill got interested. "Say, that's not so stupid at that." He ducked from the book that Jane swung towards his head. "But how can we go about answering those questions? How can I go about getting to know Martin Luther?"

Jane had some ideas. "Well, first I would go to Pastor Brown and ask him about Martin Luther, not just some things from a book, but with the idea of really getting to know him. And, then, tomor-

by HERBERT W. STROUP JR.

### Purpose of the topic:

Martin Luther, to many young people, appears as a "great character in history" and "founder of the Lutheran Church." As a result, he has been put on the shelf and labelled into a special category. He has been termed the "reformer," "theologian," and the like. This has tended to obscure the great breadth of the man and the real impact of his life.

This topic, therefore, has been designed to achieve the following results:

1. To help junior highs view Luther as a real person and one worth knowing.
2. To stimulate interest in understanding Luther and the times in which he lived.
3. To help the young people gain a greater appreciation of Luther's meaning to our world today.

row morning at school, I would go to Miss Hill, and since she teaches history, I'd ask her about the period of history in which Luther lived. Not just dates, but what kind of a period in history it really was—you know, like George Washington and knee britches and the cold winter at Valley Forge—that kind of thing."

By that time they had arrived at the steps leading into Jane's house. But before Jane went in, Bill said, "Say, this sounds wonderful. In fact, this might even be kind of fun. I hate to admit it, but you've been a real help—thanks—and I'll see you at school tomorrow." With a quick afterthought Bill said, "And next Sunday night, I'll see you in 1517—goodnight."

It was fun—it was interesting—and Bill learned a lot, as did the other leaguers the next Sunday evening. What did Bill learn about Martin Luther? Let's peek over his shoulder and see what he wrote.

### THE KIND OF A WORLD IN WHICH LUTHER LIVED

The sixteenth century was quite different from our twentieth century; and yet in many ways it was much like the

world in which we live. People did the same things in daily life that they do today; children lived much as we do today; and yet, there was a difference that almost is forgotten until we examine it carefully.

When Martin Luther was a boy (he was seventeen when the year 1500 came around), he lived at home, went to school, and played games, just as all children and young people do today. His home life must have been pleasant except for the fact that discipline in those days was rather strict. No family discussions on important matters; what father said was *Law*—and woe to the youngster who stepped out of line. Luther once wrote: "My father once whipped me so that I ran away and felt ugly toward him until he was at pains to win me back." And while this may sound harsh, it was the accepted method and manner of discipline and Luther did not seem to carry any resentment with him in remembering it. In fact, he was always very close to his parents and they were very proud of him.

When Luther went to school, he became a boy among boys—if you can study the subjects he did and still have fun! The main subject in school was Latin: not just learning the grammar and



reading a little bit of Latin literature here and there. Latin was learned to be read—and spoken! That sounds dull, but was really very important, because Latin was the language of the Church, of law, of travel, and of the schools. Without a thorough knowledge of it, you could not hope to do any further work in any important area. Yes, they even had “dunces” in school, and the poor boy who did not know his lesson had to wear a donkey mask—until another boy who knew even less was discovered by the teacher.

But school would close each day and the boys would go running home to their games. Games? Yes, games such as boys play even today. Martin Luther must have played blind-man’s-buff, chess, quoits, and tennis. And when they tired of those games, they would wrestle, shoot arrows, go bowling, and play hockey.

They even had a kind of medieval “beatnik”—a student who enrolled in school but spent most of his time wandering around the countryside and sometimes getting into trouble. How could you identify a medieval “beatnik?” No, not by tight jeans and a dirty sweater—the medieval “beatnik” wore a yellow scarf. But Luther didn’t quite approve of “beatniks” and in his later life wrote some rather sharp things about them.

I don’t think you would have liked living in the towns of those days. They were quite different from the towns we live in today. Very few of the streets were paved and when the snow melted in the spring, you waded through streams of water and deep mud. Garbage was usually thrown out of the windows onto the street and the swine were the scavengers which kept the streets fairly clean. At night, there would be no lights outside, so that when you were forced to walk the streets, you carried a torch. But you very seldom went out after dark—it was more important to get to bed early so that no hour of daylight would be wasted.

One of the most important features of Luther’s life as a boy was the Church. In the elementary schools Luther learned

many sacred songs and bits of the liturgy. He attended the services of the church in company with his fellow students and on special holy days he walked in the colorful processions. Thus, he learned in school a continuation of that which he had learned at home from his devout parents; that the church was most important and that religion was a part of everyday life.

But what a strange religion it must have been compared to what we learn in our Luther Leagues. Christianity it was, but mixed with superstition and German paganism. The world, as the boy Luther saw it, was filled with spirits and devils. Out in the woods were elves, gnomes, fairies, and all kinds of creatures who could cause trouble for people. These were the demons who caused the storms and disease and were even accused of stealing eggs, causing cream to sour, and anything else that was unpleasant for people. All of these ideas crept into the attitudes displayed in the Church and while it must have been comforting for Luther to go to church, it also must have been a frightening experience—for even God was presented as a stern and ruthless judge who condemned men seemingly without mercy for sin and wrongdoing.

Thus, demons in the woods and a vengeful God in church combined to create the Christianity in which Luther lived as a boy. No wonder in a later year, while crossing an open field during a severe thunderstorm, he cried out in complete fright, “St. Anne, help me! I will become a monk.”

## **WHAT KIND OF A MAN WAS LUTHER?**

Do you know some parents in your church whose homes you like to visit? You know the kind of home where the door is always open to the gang for good fun and sometimes, good food?

What kind of a man was Luther? You get some idea of this when you visit him in his home. In the first place, when you visit Luther in his home, you must get set for some surprises because you never know just who will be there also. People

were always coming and going, all kinds of people, all kinds of children.

Luther had six children, all born within a period of eight years. In addition the Luthers brought up four orphaned children, which made quite a gathering when it came time for meals. Since the home in which Luther lived was quite large, it served also as a hospital, and many sick people were present. With such a crowd it was difficult to finance the budget, so Luther began to take in student boarders. How many people would be present for an evening gathering? Well, count on an average of twenty-five—and no recreation room in the basement!

But what fun they must have had! Luther loved music and songs were sung with even the smallest child entering in. And when the children became sleepy and started to bed good conversation and arguments took place between Luther and the students. It is a pleasant home to visit and wonderful fun to know the Luther family.

But some years before this Martin Luther had no idea he would ever be in such a home nor have such a family.

### LUTHER'S CHOICE OF VOCATION

When Martin Luther vowed to enter a monastery, it was the result of much deep thought. He must have turned over in his mind many possibilities for his life's work, for he was a talented young man. After much thought he chose to study law.

But deep inside of Luther was the haunting feeling that unless he served God completely and totally, he would never find the satisfaction in life which he desired. And so, after much thought and the terrifying incident of the thunderstorm, Luther entered the Augustinian cloister at Erfurt.

Luther made good progress, was ordained, and became a professor and lecturer at the University of Wittenberg.

But underneath his success there was still a deep discontent.

For one thing, Luther felt that no matter what he did, no matter how many prayers he said, no matter how much he

fasted, or went to church, nor how much he followed the teachings of the Church, he still was not as close to God as he wished to be. For another thing, many of the practices of the church disturbed him. He had begun to discover the differences between the superstitions of his youth and the teachings and practices of the Church and Christianity as it was stated and taught in the New Testament.

### LUTHER AS A REFORMER

Finally Luther decided to raise some question about the practice of the Roman Church in selling indulgences. He raised this question by placing 95 theses or propositions for debate on the church door at Wittenberg. The date was October 31, 1517—the Eve of All Saints Day—and we now mark that day as the start of the Reformation.

What a tremendous sensation these theses caused! Luther thought he had lighted a small match in a very dark hall. Instead, he had lighted a bonfire on the top of the highest mountain!

What caused such a sensation? It was simply Luther's insistence that the Gospel was the final authority and the rule and guide for faith and practice; not only for the individual but for the Church itself. That may not sound too surprising to us, but in the early sixteenth century it was highly surprising.

To Luther this had become the heart of Christianity. For what he discovered became the cornerstone of the Lutheran Church and of the Protestant faith: that one does not come to God bearing gifts of goodness so that God will accept him. One comes to God only in faith—believing in Jesus Christ—and God accepts him. This is called "Justification by Faith," a term that is hard for any one to understand. But you can understand it if you remember that we are saved by God's Grace through faith—not what we do, but what Christ has done for us.

This was enough to bring an end to the medieval church and to usher in the Protestant church and our modern world.

What kind of a man was Martin Lu-



ther? Dr. Amos John Traver in his book *A Lutheran Handbook* uses three phrases to describe him:

1. "*Giant in Intellect.*" Luther was one of the great scholars of his age. He translated the Bible from the original languages into the German language so that all the people might have an opportunity to read and study it. He wrote many pamphlets and sermons which were printed. He wrote the Catechism which is still used for study and in confirmation classes in the Lutheran Church.

2. "*Giant in Will.*" Luther was of

a strong, determined mind. When he found something to be true, he held to it, regardless of the opposition. So he could say in a great declaration of faith at the Diet at Worms, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me."

3. "*Giant in Soul.*" We talk of our modern age as being an age of pressure. Luther's life was filled with pressures, troubles and problems. Yet he had a devoted family life, a deep and dedicated faith in Christ, and a serene and trusting confidence that God was with him. Thus he could enjoy all of God's world despite the problems and pressures.

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## PRESENTATION POINTERS

This is a topic that will require careful preparation because there are certain facts required by the subject that cannot be avoided. It would be well to make the assignments for this topic well in advance of the required time so that careful preparation may be made.

A key resource person for this subject will be the pastor. Not only will he be able to give good advice on presentation, but he will also have books and pamphlets that will help in preparing the topic.

Some of the books you may wish to consult are as follows:

Bainton, Roland H. *Here I Stand. A Life of Martin Luther.* New York. Nashville. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. 1950.

Coulton, G. G. *Medieval Panorama.* New York. Meridian Books. 1955.

Durant, Will. *The Reformation. The Story of Civilization: Part VI.* New York. Simon and Schuster. 1957.

Lindsay, Thomas M. *A History of the Reformation. Volume I. "The Reformation in Germany."* New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1936.

Traver, Amos John. *A Lutheran Handbook.* Revised edition. Philadelphia. Muhlenberg Press. 1936.

Biblical references that may be used as a Scripture lesson are Romans 1:16, 17, and Ephesians 2:8, 9.

Be certain that in presenting Luther and his times it is made clear that the world in which he lived was a changing world, not only in the area of religion, but in other areas as well. Luther's life span was from 1483 to 1546. Show that during this time Vasco da Gama found a

sea route to India (1498), Columbus discovered America (1492), Cabot reached North America (1497), Magellan circled the earth by ship (1519-1522) and Balboa reached the Pacific Ocean (1513).

Great impetus was given to Luther's translation of the Bible as well as his other writings due to the fact that Gutenberg in 1456 had printed the first books with movable type. This was a great age when many doors of knowledge and understanding were being opened and Luther should be presented as a dynamic figure in a dynamic era.

## METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. The topic could be presented in the form of a panel discussion followed by questions and comments. Three leaguers could each take one of the main headings and develop the total picture.

2. One leaguer, well acquainted with the life of Luther, could act as Luther, be introduced to the group as Luther, and then have the group ask questions about his life. This would be a reverse on "This is Your Life"—a type of "What is Your Life?"

3. A "This is Your Life" program could be presented, in which numerous leaguers would take one small section of the life of Luther—as a boy, a student, a teacher, a reformer, etc.—and present each part of the complete life.

4. It would be well, regardless of the method of presentation used, to try to draw out the various things the leaguers have heard others say about Luther. Many children in the Roman Church have been taught that Luther started the Reformation in order to get married. This topic would be an excellent time to dredge out such statements and show how false and un-historical they really are.

# WHERE ROMAN CATHOLICS DIFFER

what are the basic differences  
between Catholicism and Lutheranism?  
this topic will tell you

"MY father says that Catholics worship idols," Judy said to the other five members of the confirmation class who had stopped at Al's for cokes with her.

"I don't believe that's true," exclaimed Karen. "They worship the same God we do."

"They pray to statues and things, I know," Bob commented. "But I remember the pastor said one time that they were actually praying to some saint in heaven and not to the statue."

"What can the saints do for them that God can't do?" asked Terry. "The thing that would bother me is the matter of having to confess my sins to a priest. I guess they must not believe that God hears their prayers and confessions directly."

"I don't think we're being very fair," said Karen. "Theresa is one of my best friends and she goes to St. Michael's Church. She often talks about their church and they have a lot of things we do, like baptism and confirmation and Communion. I think we ought to ask Pastor Kirkland if we can't talk about these things next week."

On Thursday evening, a week later, the confirmation class members were chattering away as usual before getting down to business, while Pastor Kirkland was completing some writing on the blackboard. When he had finished, he stepped over to Penny and asked her to distribute some strips of paper with scriptural references typed on them. Then he rapped on the table for silence and spoke.

"Members of the class," he began, "most of you already know that rather

by JOHN D. ICKES

than studying the Second Commandment this evening, we will try to abide by the request of some of you and make as fair a comparison as we can of some Roman Catholic beliefs with major Protestant and particularly Lutheran beliefs. Let us pray."

The pastor offered the following prayer: "Our Father and our God, there are times when we are weak and uncertain in our faith, and might easily be turned aside from faith in Thee and Thy Word. We pray that we might be more firm in our convictions and always ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us. Give us strength that our moments of hesitation and fear may become moments of victory and assurance. We pray also, Father, that we may be guarded from bigotry and judgment against those whose faith may differ from our own. Make us always patient but enduring, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

After a moment Pastor Kirkland spoke again. "I understand that an informal reason for the request to have this session on beliefs of Roman Catholics.



"Before we get into the subject too deeply, let me say that you fifteen are certainly not the only young people who are perplexed and perhaps somewhat prejudiced in regard to the Roman Catholic Church and its doctrines. I am sure that one of the main reasons for these attitudes is that of ignorance. We all at times tend to be either afraid or suspicious of people or groups we do not understand very well. Let me say also that, while we Protestants must be careful at all times lest we fail to assert our beliefs when it is necessary and wise, we must always remember that we live in a land of religious freedom, and therefore, if we expect others to respect our faith, we must respect the faith of others. Unfortunately, many unfair statements are made by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. I don't mean to say that all criticisms of religion or doctrines are unfair. I simply mean that all people should make sure they know what they are talking about when they criticize the faith of others. Surely we all know that all Protestants are not what we would call 'good' Protestants. Likewise, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church would readily admit, I am sure, that all Catholics are not 'good' Catholics. By 'good' in either case I mean active, well-informed and Christian people. Now, are there any questions before we get down to particular beliefs?"

One hand went up. "Yes, Kathy?" said the pastor.

"Do you mean to say that Catholics are Christians?" asked Kathy.

"Yes," Pastor Kirkland replied. "They are Christians in most ways that we might say we are Christians. I believe this will become clear as we move along in comparing their beliefs with ours. Are there any more questions?"

"Yes, I have one," said Karen. "Most Catholics I know call themselves 'Catholics.' You have been sometimes calling them 'Catholics' and other times 'Roman Catholics.' Is there any difference?"

"Yes, there is a very real difference to us," said Pastor Kirkland. "The word 'catholic' means 'universal.' In this sense

you and I are catholics too. In fact, many Lutheran churches, in reciting the creeds say the words, 'Holy Catholic Church' where we say 'Holy Christian Church. We do consider ourselves catholics, that is, members of the Church Universal. On the other hand, 'Roman Catholic' refers to that branch of the Christian Church which has its world-wide headquarters in Rome. The name also is used because the earthly head of that Church is known as the Bishop of Rome. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, 'Roman Catholic' is the correct title, since we also are 'catholic.'

"Now, if there are no more questions, will you please look at this side of the blackboard. Here you will notice, I have written down a list of our most important teachings. We have discussed all of them in our confirmation class at one time or another. I have written them down for us this evening, not as a review lesson, but to show you some very important points at which the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches do agree. The list is not complete by any means. It contains only some of our most basic beliefs—and theirs."

The following is the list of doctrines which Pastor Kirkland had written on the blackboard under the heading, "Protestants and Roman Catholics Agree in General Principle:"

- 1) The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed:
  - a) God as Creator and Father
  - b) Jesus Christ as Son of God, Saviour and Lord
  - c) The Holy Spirit as Comforter and Guide
  - d) The Christian Church as the Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints
  - e) The Forgiveness of Sins
  - f) The Resurrection
  - g) Life after death or immortality (Heaven and Hell)
- 2) Scriptural, but not stated specifically in the Creed as doctrine:
  - a) The Ten Commandments as the basic Moral Law



- b) Original and Actual Sin (The Fall of man)
- c) The Incarnation (God-in-Man in Christ)
- d) Redemption of man from sin through Jesus Christ
- e) Our responsibility to love God and our neighbor

"We have studied in the past," Pastor Kirkland went on, "how the two creeds named here are based carefully on the teachings of scripture. So, you see, the first group of beliefs have a doubly strong basis or reason for our accepting them. They are taught by the scriptures, and, through the creeds, we know that they were accepted and taught by the early Christian Church. Those beliefs in the second group, while they may not be explicitly stated in the creeds, are implied there, and we do have specific teachings and references relating to them in the scriptures themselves."

"We seem to agree with them on everything that's important," Kenneth said. "So, why aren't we Roman Catholics, or why aren't they Protestant?"

"Your question is well taken, Kenneth," said the pastor. "And I believe the answer will become clear to you as we examine the other side of the black-board." He turned the board around. "Here," he continued, "are some statements which, to the best of my knowledge, summarize certain beliefs or principles of the Roman Catholic Church with which we Protestants disagree. In parentheses I have written either a brief statement or a scripture reference to explain what we believe or why we object to their belief on the subject. Let me remind you again that these are some of the most outstanding and most familiar beliefs only. They are the ones we hear the most about, perhaps because they are the ones to which we object the most. We couldn't begin to make a complete study this evening."

Following are the items which Pastor Kirkland had written, with his brief comment about each.

"Protestants Disagree with These Roman Catholic Doctrines:

(a) Purgatory — a region between heaven and hell for the purifying of the soul before entering heaven. (There is no scriptural basis for this. Read Luke 23:43; Hebrews 9:27.)

(b) Indulgences — or removing punishment for temporal sins by reciting prayers, creeds or words of adoration which reduce the number of days one is to spend in purgatory. (Hebrews 10:14; Romans 3:23, 24; Isaiah 53:5)

(c) The Pope or Bishop of Rome a successor to Christ on Earth, claiming Peter as the first Bishop of Rome. (While Peter was recognized as a senior Apostle and teacher, there is no scriptural proof that he was a bishop. He himself never claimed this authority. There was no pope until the fifth century.)

(d) Forbidding priests to marry. (Priests were permitted to marry until 1075 A.D., when the marriages of all clergy were annulled by edict of the pope. Hebrews 13:4; Mark 1:30; 1 Timothy 3:2, 4, 5.)

(e) Transubstantiation — or the bread and wine changing into the actual body and blood of Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:16. The bread remains bread and the wine remains wine.)

(f) The word of the Church is superior to the Bible. (In 1229 A.D. the Bible was put on a list of books which Roman Catholics were not permitted to read. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.)

(g) The supremacy of the Pope, even in temporal things, is to be enforced. It is necessary to salvation that every man should submit to the pope. (Matthew 22:21; John 18:36; Matthew 23:10.)

(h) The Immaculate Conception of Mary — Mary being born without sin. (This was declared a doctrine as late as 1854. It has no basis in scripture. Romans 3:23. Mary needed a Saviour. Luke 1:46, 47.)

(i) The Infallibility of the Pope — that is, the ability of the Pope to teach without error. When he does this, all must believe and obey. (Since the pope is also human, how can he claim perfection in anything? This doctrine was not claimed until 1870.)

(j) The Roman Catholic Church does not recognize any other Church as truly Christian. To them, we are living in error and ignorance. (They have only their own doctrines to support this position. It cannot be supported by scripture.)

(k) They recognize marriages performed by a priest only. To them, people married by a minister or public official are not really married. (They did not state this as a policy until 1908.)

(l) Assumption of the Virgin Mary—or the belief that Mary went directly to heaven without experiencing death. (This belief was not an official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church until 1950. It has absolutely no support in the Bible.)

When the class had finished examining the above list of doctrines, and the important questions were answered, Pastor Kirkland said, "As you can readily see, one of the most basic differences between Lutheran and Roman Catholic beliefs is found in the importance we place upon the Bible. The Roman Catholic believes that his first duty is to believe and obey what the church teaches, and that God's grace is won or achieved by good works, including attending mass and receiving the sacraments. On the other hand, we believe, like Martin Luther, that the scriptures are our chief guide in both faith and life, and that God's grace comes to us through our faith in Christ. This reliance upon the Bible is mostly what we mean when we call ourselves 'evangelical.' It means that our faith is based on the 'evangel' or message," another word for 'Gospel' Kenneth, do you have an answer to your question now, of why we aren't all Roman Catholics?"

"Yes," replied Kenneth. "Now I think they should become Lutherans."

"Well," said the pastor, "that would be a noble ambition. But I doubt that it will happen—at least not in my lifetime—or yours. You all should know, however, that the Roman Catholics are praying constantly that Protestants will return to their fold. They also work very

hard to win converts from our faith to theirs. And so, it is important that we be just as well informed and as firm in our faith as they are. Some words of St. Paul to his friend Timothy would be well to remember in our dealings with people of other faiths: 'Have nothing to do with stupid, senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth.' (2 Tim. 2:23-25)"

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

It is strongly urged that a pastor be present at the league meeting when the topic is discussed. Due to limitations of space it is impossible to describe each doctrine in detail. It is also impossible to anticipate all of the questions that may arise.

The scripture references contained in the body of the topic should be written on slips of paper and distributed before the beginning of the session. They may be called for at the appropriate time.

It would be very helpful if the leader could obtain a copy of a Roman Catholic catechism and spend some time studying it during the week preceding the presentation of the topic. A good suggestion is *The New Baltimore Catechism*, by Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., Benziger Brothers, Inc., New York, 1941. The leader can also obtain from the United Lutheran Publication House, a booklet, *The Split Between Roman Catholicism and Christ*, published by The Luther Press, 2112 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y. 25c per copy.

## WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

The hymn numbers are for the Christian Youth Hymnal. If your group uses a different hymnal, look up the hymn by title in the alphabetical index.

HYMN 154 "Christ, Thou Art the Sure Foundation"

PSALM 46, Page 346

PRAYER 31, Page 368, or the prayer contained within the topic

HYMN 156 "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word"

SCRIPTURE Matthew 16:13-20

TOPIC with Discussion

HYMN 149 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"



by JOAN GILLILAND

**"L**OOK at that snow coming down. That cancels all our plans for this evening."

How many times have you had to say this because of an unannounced blizzard? Well, don't say it anymore, because the whole purpose of dating isn't to get out, but to get together.

So now you're stuck in the house for a Saturday evening. Here is an excellent recipe for a snowy evening:

- 1 bag of marshmallows
- 8 sticks of wood
- 1 big fireplace
- 1 snowed-in couple

Place wood in fireplace and light. Put marshmallows on end of stick and cook. Add dashes of laughter and companionship.

If you aren't completely snowed in, and if it is possible for the whole gang to come over, make the evening into a record dance.

A game of "Bigger and Better" is always loads of fun. Start with a small item, such as a button or a piece of candy, and go from door to door exchanging the article always for something "bigger and better." The couple or team with the biggest and the best wins. On a wintry evening, be sure to dress warmly.

Along with record dances at home, the snowy season of winter offers many outdoor activities. Perhaps a train or bus runs to a near-by ski area. If transporta-

# RECIPES FOR WINTER DATING

tion is your problem, your parents might be willing to drive up. If you don't skis, substitute toboggans, sleds, or skates.

How about this recipe for winter fun?

- 2 horses
- 1 sleigh
- Several couples
- Lots of snow
- 1 cold night in winter

Mix well together, and when thoroughly chilled, blend in a warm campfire with a dash of community singing.

Why do anything extra fancy? Just sitting and talking is a very good way to find out a person's likes and dislikes. Getting together can be educational as well as fun.

Homework is always fun to do with another person. Perhaps he is a whiz at mathematics, while she can help him with that difficult English assignment. Don't *do* each others lessons, but become a teacher and *help*. Make sure that the first time you do homework together you pick a night when there is very little work to be done. If you can't do homework together too well, you won't be a total loss for the next day's class.

Do you have the gang over . . . ?

- 1 good play
- 1 director
- A pinch of ham
- Several actors and actresses

Applause. Add an audience of friends and parents.

A play is fun, but are you still trying to get an English assignment out of the way? Read that poetry aloud. Discuss the American literature book. And learn while doing it!



Turn about is fair play. Instead of entertaining yourself all the time, try your hand at amusing others. This can vary from a little brother to a great-grandmother. Don't you know some elderly shut-in who would appreciate a visit from some teen-agers? Most old folks get a real "charge" to see the younger generations in action. And that little friend of yours who always wants to tag along or stick around, let him join you in an afternoon of fun.

If an afternoon babysitting job is available, perhaps the parents would let you do it as a couple. This is not only an afternoon of fun but also a way to save money for the next date. Be careful when babysitting together—some parents totally object. Restrict couple babysitting to the afternoon. And always make sure it's all right with the parents.

The community offers many charity openings in which you can fit. Around election time, perhaps you could be authorized to go from door to door, making sure that people are registered and voting. While a mother goes to the polls, watch her children for a free half hour.

The Good Will or a similar organization would be more than pleased if you would scout the neighborhood for old clothes . . . and how much more fun if you do it with your best beau or belle! To make this worthwhile activity fun, call it a scavenger hunt. As you go from door to door, announce that you are on a scavenger hunt for old clothes. These clothes will be given to Lutheran World Action, or for whatever drive you are collecting.

Did you know that parents can be friends? If the weather is bad, and you and your date are "grounded" for the evening, share with the family. All kinds of games are good group mixers. Scavenger hunts (in the house), ping-pong, shuffleboard, and word games are excellent for family fun. With two adults to help, now is a good time to learn to play bridge. You never are too young to play this fascinating game which you will use the rest of your lives. Char-

ades is a good impromptu contest. Choose a specific category and pantomime away!

2 parents

1 son or daughter

1 date

Some family games

Take the parents and add the young people. Mix well with several clever group games. Put refreshments around people. Serves 4.

Luther League can be fun also when you participate together. Perhaps your youth group has planned to go to a movie or to go bowling. Join the group.

The holidays are coming. Why not Christmas shop together, and stop off for a snack at the nearest drugstore when your feet get weary. Or why not join a bunch of your friends and go Christmas caroling around the neighborhood.

The Christmas spirit is contagious. What could be more fun than a snowball fight! Build a fort, and with a ready supply of ammunition, fire away!

New Year's Eve offers a wonderful occasion for a party. Egg nog, games, and people add to make a most enjoyable evening.

With all these suggestions, don't forget the old stand-bys. Bowling, roller skating, and the movies are open all year around.

Schools always are having some activity taking place. Before the next dance, act as host and hostess to a "coketail" party. Most schools have dances, talent shows, and plays.

A progressive dinner party is a wonderful way to get together. As you progress from house to house the dinner progresses. An appetizer is at the first house, salad at the next, the main course at the third, and dessert at the last house. For the fifth house, or the home where you had the dessert, have a record party.

These ideas are here to vary your winter dating program. Don't forget the most important recipe of all—"the whole purpose of dating isn't to get out, but to get together."

# OBSERVE ADVENT WITH A WREATH

## *Advent topic and project*

by ANN EASTMAN

Baking Christmas cookies — buying Christmas presents — addressing Christmas cards — these are the things which keep us busy during the four weeks before Christmas. We are so busy making sure that we have the right card for the right person that Christmas comes and we have forgotten its true meaning.

An old, old Advent custom which has helped people prepare spiritually for the Great Day is the lighting of the candles on the Advent wreath. However, this custom is probably new to most of us. The Advent wreath originated many years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany. It probably was suggested by many of the light symbols which were used in early folklore around this time of year. Christians in the medieval times kept many light and fire symbols alive as popular traditions of the ancient folklore. Around the sixteenth century the custom started of using lights as a religious symbol of Advent. This custom spread quickly among the people of eastern Germany and was soon accepted by those in other countries. More recently it has found its way to America and has become a custom cherished in many homes.

The Advent Wreath is a wreath made of evergreen, particularly spruce or fir. Fixed within the wreath are four candles, one for each Sunday in Advent. On the first Sunday in Advent the first candle is lighted. In the home this candle is lighted every night throughout the first week. On the second Sunday two candles are lighted; on the third, three candles

are lighted; etc. On Christmas day one has a wreath with the four lighted candles. In some homes on Christmas Eve one large white candle is added to the center of the wreath. Stars are often added to the wreath. On the stars are Old Testament prophecies which refer to the coming of the Christ Child. Violet ribbons fasten these stars to the wreath. (Violet is the Advent liturgical color.)

In some sections of Europe it is customary for the persons having the name of John or Joan to have the first right to light the candles on the Advent wreath or the Christmas tree. This is customary because John the Evangelist starts his Gospel by calling Christ the "Light of the World." Another custom with the lighting of the wreath is to turn out all the lights when the wreath is lighted, therefore, enabling everyone to concentrate on its true meaning.

Advent wreaths are as popular in the church as in the home. In churches the wreath is often suspended from the ceiling on a chain or heavy violet-covered rope. It can also be placed on a stand



opped standard. In the home the wreath is usually placed on a tray or bread-board. This makes it portable for use in the family devotions.

The symbolism of the Advent wreath tells us of the Old Testament when the prophets announced the coming of the Redeemer and when the hearts of men waited longingly for the coming of the Messiah. The wreath is an ancient symbol of victory and glory. The Advent

wreath with its lighted candles symbolizes for us the coming of the Christ and the glory of His birth.

For centuries the Advent wreath has enriched the devotional life of many during the Advent season. In our homes a verse of scripture, a prayer and a hymn are used with the lighting of each candle. Through prayer, praise and meditation, we pause to prepare ourselves for this birthday of our Savior.

### How To Make An Advent Wreath

Here are two ways to make an Advent Wreath.

- (1.) To make a large wreath for the church or meeting.
  - a. Take the round wooden rim off the top of a bushel basket or get a metal hoop.
  - b. Cut four square pieces of tin (from a large tin can) approximately four inches square (or larger if you wish).
  - c. Cut slits from the corner to the centers of each piece of tin.
  - d. Take each piece of tin and bend downward two opposite sides of the piece around the wooden rim or the hoop.
  - e. Take the other two sides of the tin and bend upward, forming a circular candle holder.
  - f. Cover the wreath with evergreens.
  - g. Place four white candles in the wreath.

This wreath may be suspended or placed on a standard or table.

- (2.) For use in the home or in the small meeting group.
  - a. Use a tray or bread-board.
  - b. Make a wreath from evergreen. Perhaps you may wish to make this wreath on a wire frame.
  - c. Use four small candle holders for the candles or small blocks of wood with holes drilled in for the candles.
  - d. Hide the candle holders among the greens of the wreath.

If you have an Advent wreath that is used by the group from week to week, sprinkle the wreath with water. Keep it in a cooler place, even a refrigerator if possible. This will prevent some of the drying out of the wreath.

### Worship Services With the Advent Wreath

Plan a worship service for each of the four Sundays in Advent using the Advent wreath. Here is a suggested service for the first night:

HYMN: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 23:5-6

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the Advent path of joy to Thy throne! Let us walk it with songs of gladness and hymns of praise. Help us to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ Child and to share our thoughts with others. May we daily grow in greater love toward Thee. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.



## HYMN: "On Jordan's Banks the Herald's Cry"

You may vary your worship by planning a brief meditation, having more than one scripture, or perhaps by using only the Old Testament prophecies in all four services.

**Suggested Scriptures:** Romans 13:11; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 11:2-10; Philippians 4:4-7; John 1:19-28; Isaiah 49:13; Isaiah 40:1-5; Isaiah 55:6-12; Isaiah 40:9-11; Isaiah 9:2-7; Haggai 2:6-7.

**Suggested Hymns:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel;" "The Advent of Our God;" "Hark the Glad Sound the Savior Comes;" "O How Shall I Receive Thee;" "Rejoice All Ye Believers;" "Lift Up Your Heads Ye Mighty Gates."

**Prayers:** Write your own. The Collect for the Day may be used. Refer also to the section on "Prayers" in the *Christian Youth Hymnal*.

**Making Stars for the Wreath:** Take white paper and make small stars, just big enough to write on each a verse of scripture or its reference. Suggested Old Testament prophecies for these stars are: Jeremiah 33:1-4, Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6. Fasten these stars to the wreath with a violet ribbon.

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

**Purpose of the topic:** To help the leaguers enrich their devotional life and to prepare themselves for Christmas through the use of the Advent wreath in worship.

This material is planned for a complete Luther League program. The league should meet together for the first portion of the evening. The leader can begin the program with the questions under "Introductory Discussion." After the discussion the leader can present the topic which contains information concerning the wreath. (It would be a good idea for the leader to make an Advent wreath beforehand to use while she tells about the wreath). The league can then divide into two groups. One group can make an Advent wreath to be used by the league for worship. The other group can plan four worship services centering around the Advent wreath to be used on the four Sundays in Advent for league worship.

The leader for the evening should have all the materials assembled in the proper corners of the room for these two groups. A leader for each group should be appointed before the meeting so that he may become familiar with the materials.

Following these group sessions, the entire league will have their worship. At this time they will light the first candle of the Advent wreath.

An alternate plan: if you have a small group,

have each one make a wreath for his own personal use or for his family's devotions.

**LEADERS CHECK LIST**—For the wreath: evergreens; wire (to be used where needed); candles—four; tin (tin cans); metal shears; wooden rim from a basket (if you make a large wreath); tray; scissors; candle holders; white paper and violet ribbon for stars.

For the services: Bibles, paper, pencils, and hymnals.

**References:** Parish School magazine, November 1957; *The Christian Year*, Horn, E. T., 1957, Mulenberg Press. *Around the Year With the Trapp Family*, Trapp, M. A., Pantheon, 1955.

## SERVICE PROJECTS

(1) The league may divide into three or four groups. Each group makes an Advent wreath and takes it to a shut-in each week during the Advent season. A brief worship service may be used with the wreath. In this manner many shut-ins would be reached.

(2) The entire league may take a wreath with a service to a nursing home, special hospital, etc.

(3) Introduce the Advent wreath to the Sunday school children or another group of the church or the community.

(4) Suggest the use of an Advent wreath in the Sunday services of your church.



# THANKS-LIVING IS THANKS-GIVING

by HENRY V. KAHLENBERG

HERE it is Thanksgiving again! Isn't it a grand feeling? No school on Thursday and Friday, plenty of drumsticks and white meat plus cranberry sauce, a football scrimmage with the rest of the gang in the afternoon, or a movie with the family after dinner. There ought to be more holidays like this one! Who doesn't like a four-day week-end with no classes to attend, no books to lug, and no early rising to make the school bus and beat the tardy bell?

But hold on a minute! That isn't why the day is celebrated. Just to sleep late, to get a vacation from arithmetic problems on the blackboard and to stuff yourself with turkey dressing. The assembly at school the Wednesday before makes it clear that it's a national holiday. It has been recognized in our nation for years. Then, too, the pastor in his Thanksgiving Day sermon always says something about it being a day of religious observance. Let's not forget that it is a day when all Americans are asked to thank God. Sure you can thank God everyday—and you should.

Once upon a time a church ordered a bell for its steeple. The men who had charge decided that the factory should inscribe on it the Latin phrase: "Soli Deo Gloria." That means, "to God alone be the glory."

That's what the Pilgrims believed who started this holiday. They knew that they

had God alone to thank for bringing them to this land. When they had anchored at Plymouth Rock they drew up a document called the "Mayflower Compact." It began: "In the Name of God, Amen." Before they even set foot on land they gave God the credit for bringing them safely to these shores.

They endured a lot, but they never forgot God. Their first winter was tough. Starvation, disease, and homesickness took the lives of almost half the colonists. The cold was almost unbearable. Their food supply had gotten so low that five grains of corn were rationed to each person at a time. But by the next fall things were better. They set aside a day to "give thanks." They had little, but they thanked the Creator for what they had.

That's where this day originated. And that's the real meaning of it—to give thanks. If the Pilgrims set aside one day to be thankful for the little they had, isn't it good sense for us who have so much to express thanks? Now it's not enough just to mumble, "Thank you, God," at meal time or when you hit the pillow at night. And it isn't enough just to sing lustily, "Now thank we all our God," at the Thursday morning Thanksgiving service at church. To be real, Thanksgiving needs to be Thanks-Living. Paul once wrote: "In everything give thanks." That is to say all of life needs

to be an expression of thanks. You can't only say "Thanks." You've got to live it from morning 'till evening.

### USE YOUR HEAD

Say "thanks" with your head. Does it sound silly to say that you can live a thankful life with your head? Not if you think the matter through! People who are unthankful never use their heads to figure out Who it is who gives good gifts daily. Thinking and thanking have the same Anglo-Saxon root. The more one thinks about his blessings the more apt he will be to thank God for them. You use your head every time you decide to go anywhere. Your brain telegraphs a message to your feet to "get going." You use your head whenever you do anything.

As a simple exercise put your brain to work right now and think about the breakfast you had this morning. What was it? Toast, milk, cereal, eggs, orange juice? Where did these foods come from? Did somebody say that mother bought them at the supermarket? Of course! But use your head to think about how they got on the store shelf. Who brought them there? Well there were thousands upon thousands of people who helped to put a piece of toast on your table. The farmer who sowed the wheat, the workers who made the tractors and machinery to harvest it, the shippers who sent it to market, the flour mills, the trucking companies, the store-owners—all of them cooperated to put a piece of toast before you this morning. But go back further and see that the wheat grain could never spring from the soil without God's rain, God's sunshine, God's oxygen in the air, and a hundred other laws of His.

*Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,  
And back of the flour the mill,  
And back of the mill is the wheat and the  
shower,  
And the sun and the Father's will.*

Maltbie D. Babcock

When you use your head you come to know that God is a wonderful Creator who gave us this earth with its soil and water and minerals. Thomas Edison once lifted up a glass of milk and said: "God

is the great Chemist."

Think about just one piece of human machinery you have—the heart! It pumps gallons and gallons of blood each day year in and year out, not stopping for a second, for some seventy or eighty years. Your whole body is a miracle of God. Think about it and then thank Him for it.

Some time ago some doctors returned from an expedition into Africa. They went there to study the giraffe. The giraffe has a neck about twelve feet long. They wanted to know how he could pump blood up there into his head. He has a heart weighing about twenty-five pounds. But when he lowers his head, what keeps him from blacking out? How is blood prevented from running down? They discovered a lot of valves that worked automatically which took care of all this. All things are marvelously put together. All of God's creatures—yourself, myself, and all the animals of the field and forest—are engineering feats that nobody could duplicate.

You see, when you use your intellect God gets pretty big and important. We depend upon Him so much. We need to have Him around. If we didn't have Him around we'd be in a sorry mess. One science teacher tells us that if we were to pay the light bill of the sun at a rate of one penny per kilowatt, the one-hundred-millionth of a second of light would cost us more than 500 billion dollars. That's a steep price to pay, but God pays it for us. The trouble is that we just go on day after day taking it for granted. Only when we stop and think—use our heads—do we realize that God is mighty good to us.

### USE YOUR HEART

Say thanks with your heart. Jesus once said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy . . . heart." Now what does He mean and what has the heart to do anyway with living thankfully? Isn't the heart just a "pumping station" as we learned a moment ago? Isn't it just a part of our bodies like the kidney, lungs or brain? Indeed it is, but what



The Bible says we should love God with our heart, it means that we should love Him with our whole being. The heart has always been looked upon as the center of life. And so when it is said that we should thank God with our heart, we mean that we should express gratitude with our whole lives.

A lady once said to E. Stanley Jones who is a great missionary of our time: "I like you because you have a song in your heart." His whole life is a "song of thanks" to God.

Maybe you have trouble in getting certain assignments that your teacher gives. It might be in arithmetic or English or science or civics. Somehow you just can't grasp the stuff. So you go to class always "bit on edge" lest the teacher call on you. It might be that your "heart isn't in it." That is to say, you don't put your whole self, your best self, into the study of the subject.

That same thing holds true in regard to anything. To get the most out of something your whole heart must be in it. To get the most out of Luther League your heart must be in it. To get the most out of church your heart must be in it. To get the most out of your home, your school, your play and work, your heart must be in it.

So it is with thanksgiving. It's not enough to say, "Thank you God for everything." Your heart must be in it.

## USE YOUR HAND

Then, too, say thanks with your hand. In other words do something with your hands for God or for somebody else, and do it cheerfully. Your hands have been given by God to use for Christian service.

Have you ever noticed how often Christ's hands are mentioned in the New Testament? He laid His hands on the sick. He folded His hands in prayer. His hands were pierced when He died on Calvary. When He rose He showed His disciples His hands. There is a very prominent painting of Jesus with the little children. Maybe you have seen it or

it could be that you have it hanging in your church school room. The children are dressed in modern clothes. They are looking at His hands. The title of the painting is: "What happened to your hands?"

God gave us hands to serve and give and pray and share. God gave us hands to use in Luther League projects. God gave us hands to fill Thanksgiving baskets for the shut-ins of the congregation. God gave us hands to put contributions into the offering basket. Here's a good way to live thankfully—use your hands for Him and others!!

You need to be His hands. You can be by using them thankfully. Bishop Crotty of England tells about a girl of sixteen who was dying in a large city hospital. She was the eldest child of a poor family. Her mother was dead, and this girl had mothered the younger children. Her hands were rough and worn from dishwater and scrubbing. One day a religious fanatic found his way to her room and started to ask her a lot of questions about the Bible. She didn't know all the answers. The visitor seemed alarmed and said: "What will you do when you get to the pearly gates and God asks you these things?" The girl replied: "I will show God my hands."

In one city in Germany there is a Lutheran church that was bombed during the war. The shell tore a ghastly hole in the ceiling. High in the chancel was a statue of Christ. It was located above the altar. It looked as if the statue was not touched by the destruction. The arms of Christ were outstretched in benediction. But when the first people arrived at the scene they noticed that both hands were gone. They had been blown off by the bomb. Christ was still there—but His hands were gone. The pastor of the church decided that when his church was to be rebuilt, they would leave the statue just as it was. Christ with no hands. He wanted all those who worshipped there to know that all of us Christians who love Him and believe in Him should be His hands today. ■



# CHRISTMAS IN THE FAMILY

this topic gives ideas  
for family participation  
in the Christmas celebration

by DOROTHY SATI

THE whole family gathered around a familiar wooden box. Carefully gentle hands lifted from it a little wax angel that had always looked down on the family from just below the star on the top of the Christmas tree.

Three generations had looked up to that angel. And this year a new baby, of the fourth generation, would be held up to see her. "See the lovely angel! That came from your great-grandfather's home." It would be years before the child would fully understand the meaning of those words, but in the meantime the whole family felt just a little closer.

Every year in many homes around the world this kind of scene is re-enacted. Christmas customs have been built up that tie the family into a unit and that linger long in the memory of each member. It is worth our effort to see that we develop some delightful and unique practices that belong peculiarly to our own family.

One family I know has some transparencies made of blue tissue paper mounted between two sheets of black construction paper. They depict the manger, the shepherds, and the wise men. Made years ago by a child, they are still put on the windows every year so that the light may bring the silhouettes into relief.

## CHRISTMAS TREE RITUALS

How do you buy your Christmas tree? Fortunate families can watch trees grow and select one for each Christmas when it is just the right size. But many of us must depend upon the dealers who have trees on every corner and vacant lot. When your family buys its tree, does some member just run out and grab one? Or is it part of the family fun to go together to choose it?

No home Christmas tree would be complete without lights. Happy are those whose memories include the candles that have added their fragrance to that of the tree.

Where it stands is important. The Christmas family gets used to having it in a certain spot in a certain room.

## CANDLES

Some families, particularly when they have inherited old candle molds, make their own Christmas candles. Even if you lack the molds, you can use modern materials and melted-down wax from dinner table candles. Milk cartons are easy to use because they can be torn away from the finished candle. Use new wicking.

A story was told during World War I of a family that had always made Christmas candles into which they first put the stubs and drippings from last year's Christmas candles. While the son was in service in the Pacific, the family sent him one of the big candles in his Christmas box. He was not alone that Christmas Eve! All the Christmases of his past were with him. And he knew that the family back home was sharing the memories while they burned their candles.

## GIFTS AND CARDS

When do you distribute your family gifts? Some people always do it on Christmas Eve. Others do it early on Christmas morning. Still others wait until the whole family gathers later in the day. Occasionally with small children there must be a combination of these, but what the family *always* does is what the children will remember.

How about your Christmas cards—the ones you send? Do you buy them haphazardly, or do you select them carefully with the recipients in mind? Christmas is the one time in the year when you hear from relatives and friends you may not have seen for years. Take time to write a few personal words on many of your cards. You'll get an answer next Christmas!

What do you do about the greetings you receive? Do you just tear them open, glance at them, and drop them? Have you ever thought of holding the mail each day until some time when the family can all be together, perhaps around the dinner table? You can open them together, pass them around and really enjoy them. You might stretch your period of family devotions to include opening of the cards and then mention in your prayers those from whom you heard that day.

## TRADITIONAL COOKING

Christmas customs in most families include traditional cooking. There are certain things to cook, certain times to cook them, certain ways to serve them. One family I know has a soup supper

every Christmas Eve. The same kind of home-made vegetable soup is served, and everybody eats bowls and bowls of it. Friends without other family ties are invited to share it and to help decorate the house and trim the tree. Then all go to church.

Your family traditions should include appropriate reading. Some people seem to think that they have reached the ultimate in sentimental Christmas observance when they read Dickens' "Christmas Carol" or Van Dyke's "Story of the Other Wise Man." Bear in mind, however, that the best reading for Christmas Eve comes from the Bible. Although you will hear it at church, that cannot take the place of the family's own reading of it, by the head of the house or by the youngest member.

It is to be hoped that all Christian families are singing families and that the great hymns and carols of Christmas stay in our hearts long past the season.

In the busy days of preparation remember that this is the Advent season, days of preparation for the coming of the Christ Child. Perhaps the family can take time at regular intervals to sing familiar carols. I would suggest that each year you add a new one that you have not known in the past—perhaps from a different land.

By all means sing around your Advent wreath and when you "hang your greens." Singing is also a good way to close Christmas Day. And a "sing" when you take the tree down will make that task less forlorn and hurried.

## COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

What happens to the discarded trees in your community? A Christmas tree lying on a trash wagon or in the gutter is a sad sight. How about organizing a neighborhood tree-burning for Twelfth Night? Everybody takes his tree down and brings it to a central spot on January sixth. Even in cities there is likely to be some vacant lot that would be a safe place. The fire department usually is glad to help because this is safer than for people to burn their trees in their own



back yards. As trees are added to the fire, the flames and the fragrance give a glory to the end of the season.

Realize that the proper observance of the Christmas season in your community depends upon you. If the decorations in your commercial area have gone completely secular, you can counsel with your merchants. You can help them to arrange displays that would be more in keeping with the sacred theme of the holidays.

Is the Christmas parade in your town simply a Santa Claus and fairy tale affair? This kind belongs to the commercial aspect of Christmas. But there is no reason why the pageantry should not portray the real Christmas story. If the council of churches or your congregation does sponsor such a parade, do you support it by participating and by getting your friends to go to see it?

What about those people who have no family? In your community are many individuals and families who have no close ties nearby, or perhaps in the world.

There is the old widower, without children, who has *only* memories. Of course, he's a bit tiresome—always telling about things no one else remembers. But perhaps if you invited him to share Christmas with you, you might add a bit to your own traditions out of his store of memories.

A young couple has just moved into town. They have each other, but they don't have their families. Maybe they will bring into your household a custom from a different land if you will include them in your festivities.

The Norwegians have a custom that is symbolic of the gifts we give the helpless and those in want. It is the putting of a sheaf of grain on a pole for the birds at Christmas time. In a small community you will know who the needy people are. In a large city, welfare agencies can tell you who should be helped.

By all means, give to these people at Christmas time, but give wisely. Don't just bring a carton to the parsonage and ask the pastor to give it to some family. The people he knows may need baby

foods, yet there isn't a single jar in your box. Or they may *not* need baby foods but he finds two dozen assorted!

In the development of Christmas traditions in the home it is important to remember that Christmas is Christ's day. Do you spend much time on the selection of gifts for each other, yet when you are asked to participate in a Christmas program say, "But that would take several evenings for rehearsal." Do you spend a large amount on a decoration for the lawn and, weeks later, because you forgot to give a gift to Jesus, toss the empty Christmas offering envelope into the waste basket? Do you spend hours setting up the electric trains but leave to a devoted few "on the committee" the task of decorating the church?

Perhaps it could be one of your family traditions to help with the church decoration. In one congregation when the tree is decorated, each family brings an ornament and places it on the tree.

All the decorations and lights at gift-giving should serve the purpose of emphasizing the true spirit of Christmas. These traditions have grown up because people wanted to express their love and gratitude to God for the most wonderful gift that ever came to man.

Until two thousand years ago the salutation for the winter solstice was, "I give you light for the year." But at Bethlehem the customary salutation came, "I give you Christ—the light to the world."

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

This meeting should be a consideration of Christmas traditions in the home. You will want the inclusion of many questions, which are meant to be simply rhetorical. When the leader asks a question, he should pause for response and discussion, which will undoubtedly bring forth many customs not mentioned herein. The sharing of experiences will prove of lasting value.

For the worship portion of the meeting it is suggested that some carols be used to open the service.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES: Luke 2:51, 52; Matthew 4:9, 10; 11:19, 20

SUGGESTED PRAYERS: CYH 23, CYH 257

# THE FAMILY FACES A JURY

## problems in modern families

by JANICE CLODFELTER

**JUDGE:** Court now in session! The modern American family is on trial! Before proceeding with the case we note that this trial is nation-wide. The American family *is* on trial today throughout our land. The charges are many—Children and parents can't agree on such vital subjects as "who's boss?" . . . "how old is old enough to have the family car?" . . . "how late is late enough to be out?" . . . "how much is enough allowance?" . . . "how much authority does a parent have in a 'democratic' family?" Some problems are old. Some are strictly twentieth century! There is more than one side to the cases you are about to try.

### *Case 1: The Case of the Midnight Watch*

(A mother and daughter are discussing the hours of the daughter's return following a movie that night with girlfriends.)

**SALLY:** 'Bye, Mom. See you later.

**MOTHER:** Just a minute, young lady. Where are you going?

**SALLY:** Jane asked me to join her and the gang for a movie.

**MOTHER:** But we haven't talked about this. How do you know that you have my permission?

**SALLY:** Don't be a square, mom. That's kid stuff. You always let me go, and besides, you told me last week that I had to learn to make my own decisions.

**MOTHER:** But that was when you were in a dither about whether to wear your green dress or the blue one to the party.

**SALLY:** Well, I don't see what's the difference. A decision is a decision. Don't you trust me?

**MOTHER:** Of course I trust you. But I think I should *know* where you're going, with *whom* you're going, and what *time* you'll be back. And you're not going anywhere until your father or I say so!

**SALLY:** You sound like a D.A.! Good grief, I just can't have any life of my own. You treat me just like a child!

**Discussion:** Does the idea of "getting permission" from parents belong in the dark ages? How much should Sally's mother know about her plans? What about a curfew for coming in at night? Who decides? What determines the decision?

### *Case 2: Case of the Battered Budget*

**BILL:** How about an advance on next week's allowance, Dad!

FATHER: That sounds familiar! What happened to *last* week's advance on *this* week's allowance? If I ran my business like you run your financial affairs I'd be bankrupt in a week.

BILL: Gee Dad, haven't you heard—the cost of living's gone up! It takes more to live than it used to.

FATHER: What do you need this time?

BILL: Well, there's a special dance coming up next week.

FATHER: And a special girl, I guess?

BILL: Sure. I have to get flowers, and something extra for a snack afterward. And, now that I think about it, I could use a new suit.

FATHER: Bill, this is ridiculous. You don't have to spend *that* much for a date. Why, your mother and I used to have fun, just doing simple, inexpensive things—like listening to records at home.

BILL: Dad, don't talk like a "square." That's out, but strictly. Times have changed, Dad. Our gang goes places and does things.

FATHER: And spends money! It seems to me that an allowance is to be lived within, and there's no time to start learning like the present!

**Discussion:** Is Bill's Dad unreasonable to expect him to live by yesterday's financial standards? Is Bill expecting too much of a "handout?" How necessary is it for a young person to spend as much as his friends to be accepted? How should an allowance be decided upon?

### *Case 3: The Case of the Quarreling Kin*

BETTY: How I ever got you for a kid brother, I just don't dig!

JIM: You're just mad because you didn't get your way!

MOTHER: What's the trouble this time?

BETTY: Mother, I just have to use the telephone and Jim won't hang up. He's been on it for *hours*.

JIM: Five minutes, Mom. No more.

MOTHER: Who was it who used the telephone for 15 minutes last night, Betty? Your father couldn't even let us know that he'd be late for supper.

BETTY: But that was different—*my* conversation with Larry was important! It's just that Jim has no respect for anyone else's problems! He's just wasting time on the phone. I'm *older* than he is. Why don't you make him listen to me?

MOTHER: Don't you think we each have to think of each other? You and Jim are constantly quarreling. Can't you learn to work out things peacefully?

**Discussion:** Should kid brother or sister always give in to the wishes of big brother or sister? What are some other problems which arise between brothers and sisters? Suggest some ways of reaching peaceful solutions.

### *Case 4: The Case of the Disappearing Car*

CARL: I'm going to take the car, Dad.

DAD: Wait a minute! I decide who uses the car and when. I paid for it. I own it. Don't you think you should at least *ask* for it?

CARL: But I thought you said this was a democratic world and a family should be run democratically, too!



**DAD:** I believe in being democratic. I'm willing to discuss it, but I still believe that parents make the final decisions in a home.

**CARL:** Gee, Dad, you're a square. I've heard of families like that but I didn't think that I belonged to one.

**Discussion:** How much authority does a parent have in a "democratic" family? Does "honoring thy father and thy mother" still apply? If so, is it only a law or does it help promote family understanding and happiness? Is use of the family car by a teen-ager a matter for special consideration? On what occasions should it be permitted?

### *Case 5: The Case of the Vanishing Family*

**FATHER:** What a surprise to have all of the family here for the meal tonight! Can't remember how long it's been since that happened.

**RICHARD:** Well, I really shouldn't be here tonight. The team had a game scheduled, but we had to postpone it till tomorrow night—on account of the rain this afternoon.

**MARY:** And I'm going out in a little while. Jim's coming for me.

**MOM:** But this is the only night this week your father doesn't have a meeting. We thought it would be nice if we could all do something together.

**DICK:** Like what?

**MOM:** Well, we could . . . watch television—or, well, any number of things.

**DICK:** That doesn't sound very exciting. Anyway, I thought I'd call Bill and see if he's interested in going to the movie . . . It's a new western.

**DAD:** This family seems to be going in separate directions all the time. Can't we just enjoy being together sometime? When I was growing up we didn't have to be going places all the time. This seems more like a hotel than a home sometimes. Nobody's here except to eat and sleep. It may be modern, but I don't like it.

**Discussion:** Is the modern home a hotel or a home?  
Who's to blame for conflicting family schedules?  
How much time should a family have together?  
What is the value in separate activities? Joint activities?

## **PRESENTATION POINTERS**

The following program may be used in connection with a "Family Night" program. Invite real parents to portray the parents in each "case." The jury might be composed of an equal number of leaguers.

The presiding "judge" may be seated at a table facing the group. Props such as a gavel and robe may be desired. The families on trial should enact each case, "role-playing the situations described. Participants should be given the situations ahead of time and asked to present them in their own words.

At the conclusion of each "case" the judge may call for a verdict from the jury, which should be reached after discussion by the whole group, or the jury alone. The verdict, rather

than a mere "guilty" or "not guilty," should suggest how the problem case might be best resolved in a modern Christian family.

### **A SUGGESTED PROJECT**

The following scripture readings might be given to each family represented in the Luther League, or the league might wish to mimeograph copies for all families in the congregation, urging daily use during family worship periods.

**SUN.,** A Parents' love: Luke 14:25-32; **MON.,** Authority of Parents: Colossians 3:18-21; **TUES.,** Worth of Children: Matthew 18:1-6; **WED.,** Solving Family Misunderstandings: Ephesians 4:25-32; **THUR.,** Making Decisions: Matthew 4:1-17; **FRI.,** Values for a Family to Live By: Matthew 6:25-33; **SAT.,** Qualities of a Wise Household: Matthew 6:25-33.

*"And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'" (Acts 1:10, 11. RSV)*



## THE SECOND COMING

**T**HE second coming—sometimes referred to as the second advent—is a fascinating subject to study. It is an event usually connected with the end of the World. We will make a Bible study of it.

### ADVENT

Before we begin let us review the Advent or first coming of Christ. We will not understand the second coming unless we are clear about Christ's first coming and its purpose. Here are some questions about the first Advent of Jesus and Bible references for them.

What do we call the day on which Jesus was born?

Can you find the answers to these questions in John 3:16?

Who was Jesus?

What caused God to give Him to us?

What was God's purpose in giving Him to us?

How do we in the Church prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus?

Name the season. (*You will find the answer under "Calendar Rubrics," Common Service Book page 295, or Service Book and Hymnal page 277.*)

How is the date for the First Sunday in Advent determined? The same reference will give you the answer.

How many Sundays are there in Advent?

### A TIME OF PREPARATION

The Church Year from Christmas to Pentecost gives us the story of Christ from His birth to the fulfillment of His promise to send the Holy Spirit. Yes, as you have discovered already our Church year begins four Sundays before Christmas with the Advent Season. Why should this be? The word "Advent" comes from the Latin meaning the "coming." We use the season to prepare our lives for a proper celebration of His coming on Christmas Day.

Merchants prepare for Christmas a long time in advance. Several years ago I happened into a 5 and 10 cent store on the second day of October and found the manager putting on display the first of his Christmas merchandise. It was almost three months before Christmas! If merchants feel the need to prepare so early should we not also spend more time to prepare our lives to receive Him anew on His Birthday?

Ours, however, is a different kind of preparation. We want to be able to open our lives to Him that His Day will have the greatest possible meaning for us. We want to think again about why God gave Him for us—that God could not have fellowship with us because of our sins; that He sent Jesus to live a perfect life and take our sins on Himself; that we might come again into the Presence of God through our faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SECOND COMING

We are not preparing for His first coming, but for the renewal of our gladness that God gave Him to us. There is another reason why the Advent Season is good. We live between the first and second comings. In this Advent Season we need to prepare ourselves for the Second Coming. Let us study what the Scriptures tell us about this Second Coming.

What do we call the day on which Jesus left the disciples on earth and went back to His Father in Heaven? (*It comes forty days after Easter.*)

Describe the ascension of Jesus. (*Acts 1:9*)

What did the men "in white robes" say to the disciples about Jesus? (*verse 11.*)

The men "in white robes" were angels. Angels are messengers of God. So, at the time of Jesus' Ascension, God announced through His messengers that Jesus would come again.

How would He come? (*verse 11.*)

It must have been difficult for the disciples to lose their Lord—to see Him taken away and never be able to turn to Him and talk with Him in person as they had done ever since they knew Him.



On the other hand, it must have been good to them to have God, through His messengers, tell them that Jesus would come again in the same way He went away. He would descend to them out of the heavens in a cloud and be with them personally. It is hard for us to realize what this meant to them. We have always had the hope, and even the feeling of certainty, that we will live after death because of our acceptance of Him in faith that He is the very Son of God. For the disciples the thought of living after death with God and Jesus was a new and wonderful thought. They would miss Him but He would come back again! How soon?

## MEANING OF THE SECOND COMING

Ten days later, the Day of Pentecost, they were to have an even more wonderful experience in God's gift of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit). Then it was that they felt the very Presence of Jesus, real and close to them as if He were there in person. Their need of His physical presence now disappeared and no matter where they were the Holy Spirit supplied His Presence and became their Comforter and Guide.

Having experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives the Second Coming of Jesus took on a new meaning. It became an event having to do with the end of the world and the ushering in of the perfect Kingdom of God. Now all sin and suffering, sorrow and wrong, would cease and everything would return to the kind of perfection there was in the Garden of Eden. They asked among themselves, "How soon will Jesus return? What will happen when He comes again?"

Then the Holy Spirit began to work in the Apostles. (The twelve disciples were called Apostles after Pentecost.) Everything that Jesus had said to them while He lived with them on the earth became clear and took on new meaning. They remembered the time shortly before His crucifixion when He told them about last things on the earth. Matthew records what He said in the 24th chapter of his gospel. He remembered Jesus talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the great struggle that would go on between good and evil. Read Matthew 24:29-31.

What would happen just before the Second Coming?

Would Christ come again?

Does this agree with the message of the angels at the Ascension of Jesus? (*Acts* 1:11.)

Another statement of Jesus' is preserved for us by John in his gospel, 14:1-3.

Has verse 3 anything to do with the Second Coming and its meaning to the believers?

## THE SECOND COMING BECOMES A PROBLEM

The Second Coming soon became a problem to the early Church. The Apostles and their followers had expected Jesus to return almost immediately. They had expected to see Him come in the clouds and in glory with their own eyes. But that did not happen. Many of them were dying and Jesus had not returned. What was happening? Would He really come again? Could they keep on believing in Him? For that story we have a number of references. Let us look at some of them. If any of the Apostles should know the answer it was Peter. Let us look first at his explanation in 2 Peter 3.

What were some of the people saying about Jesus not coming back again? (*verses 1-4*)

What was Peter's answer? (*verses 5-10*)

Is the length of time the same to God as it is to us? (*verse 8.*)

What does Peter say that God is wanting to happen before Jesus comes back again? (*verse 9*)

Is Peter himself sure of the Second Coming of Jesus? (*verse 10*)

In the meantime, while we wait, what are we to do? (*verses 11-18*)

Peter tells us (*verses 15, 16*) that Paul wrote about this problem in "all his letters." Let us look at several of them. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11.

What does Paul say about those who die before Christ comes again? (*1 Thess. 4:13-18*)

What expression do both Paul and Peter use about the "time" of the Second Coming? How will it come? (*1 Thess. 5:2 and 2 Peter 3:11.*)

Do Paul and Peter agree as to what the Christian believer should do to prepare for that Coming? (*2 Peter 3:14 and 1 Thess. 5:4-11.*)

The delay in the Second Coming of Jesus must have been difficult for the early Church to understand and even a stumbling-block to the faith of many. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5.

As we read we learn what Paul feels is the reason for the delay of Christ's coming again (*verses 6-12*). It is the "lawlessness" of people—their lack of obeying God and accepting faith in Christ. God wants so very much to save all men that He is delaying the Second Coming and the end of the world until all men turn to Him.

### SUMMARY

The time of the Second Coming has been a problem to us in this century even as it was to the men of the first century. Many times groups of Christians have set dates for His coming only to be disappointed. We can sum up the whole matter in three statements:

1. Christ will come again. (*Acts 1:11.*)
2. No one knows the time of His Coming. (*Matt. 24:36.*)
3. We must keep ourselves ready at all times by living a life of faith and loving service to all mankind. (*Matt. 24:45, 46; 25:13; 25:34-36.*)

### PRESENTATION POINTERS

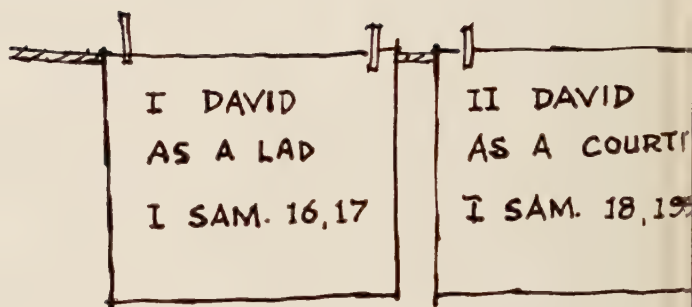
The topic as presented is little more than an outline. It is intended to be used as a Bible Study. Be sure each one has a Bible.

The topic has been developed to show the growth of the idea of Jesus coming again—beginning with the statements of Jesus concerning it and how the idea developed in the early Church. The Bible references develop this step by step. The SUMMARY may serve as the points you wish to present. The problem of the Second Coming in the world today may be explored if there is time.

It would be helpful to assign the various Scripture references a week in advance. It would also lend much to the discussion to ask each one a week in advance to find all they could concerning the Second Coming of Jesus.

# SHEPHERD MAKES GOOD

*David—a Bible Personality*



**M**OST of us make regular visits to our nearest public library. Of course our purpose is to choose a book. Have you ever thought how you go about making this choice? Do you turn to the back to check the number of pages? Do you like a book with illustrations and pictures? Do you look for the book a friend has recommended? Do you prefer "fact" or "fiction?"

Most of us will agree that we like books which look interesting even before we start to read. Often we choose fiction because it is filled with the unexpected and quickly captures our imagination. True stories are of interest too because they challenge us. We all read books which others have enjoyed or found helpful.

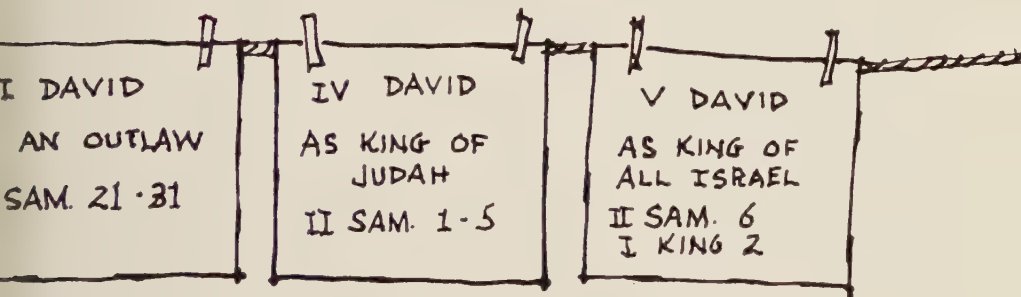


Here is a book (*hold up the Bible*) which comes well recommended. It is found in every public library. It is in almost every home. It's the Bible. This is the oldest book most of us have seen. Yet it is still a best seller. It certainly is challenging!

Our study this evening is from the Bible. We go back in time about 3000 years. We find ourselves on the hills of Bethlehem with David, the shepherd boy, who becomes king of all Israel.

We first meet David in 1 Samuel, chapter 16 (*this reference should be marked so that the leader can easily indicate the portions mentioned*). The story of his life continues all the way through 2 Samuel which has 19 chapters, right

by SHEILA RADTKE



to 1 Kings, chapter 2. That makes 36 chapters. A good-sized book!

If the story of David had an index, we might find that it would be divided into 5 parts.

(*This outline should be written on a blackboard or on pieces of cardboard which can be hung on a clothes line affair or supported by picture stands. Shelf paper would be fine. This information should be read aloud by the leader and yet written on one of the above-mentioned, large enough so that all may follow. Explain that a courtier is one who works in the palace assisting the king.*)

The life of David certainly is full of the unusual. Would you expect a shepherd to become a courtier in a king's

palace? A shepherd could become an outlaw, but how often does an outlaw become a king! It just doesn't add up.

Let's divide into study groups to gather from the Bible the facts which should give us the "answer" to our problem of reasoning and the "filling" for this 5-part outline of the life of David. (*Point to the outline.*) We will number off to five and each group will study one part of the life of David. Before you begin to study, appoint a "reporter" who will take notes and report back to all of us. Each group has from four to five questions which are written on separate sheets of paper. *Or the reporter may assign the questions to different members of the group so that it won't take too long to get all the information.*)

## Study Groups

The leader should ask if there are any questions. It is important that the instructions be understood. The reporters should be chosen wisely. Otherwise the outline of the life of David will be unsatisfactory. You may want to choose your reporters in advance. Then you could brief them. Each group may receive an envelope, i.e., *I. David as a Lad*, which will indicate the part they will study, and will contain a list of the questions and references with sufficient space for answers. The questions and references may also be on slips of paper so that the reporter can assign one question to each member or to several members depending on the size of your group.

The answers below are given to help the leader if the reporter doesn't give a full enough answer.

### STUDY GROUP 1—DAVID, AS A LAD

#### a. Describe David (1 Samuel 15:6-12)

David was a handsome boy. His complexion was ruddy or we might say that he had that "outdoor look." His eyes are described as beautiful—the kind of eyes you would notice immediately.

#### b. What did David do as a lad?

He took care of his father's sheep.

#### c. Tell what plan God had for him and why he was chosen (1 Samuel 16:6-13)

God planned that David should be the next king of Israel after King Saul. God chose David, not for his outward appearance, but because of what He saw in his heart.

#### d. What event took David from the hillside to the palace? (1 Samuel 17:17-19-58; 1 Samuel 18:1, 2)

One day David was sent by his father with food for his older brothers. They were fighting in King Saul's army against the Philistines. The Philistines sent out Goliath, a giant, to challenge any Israelite who dared fight him. David offered himself. He trusted God, and God gave him the victory. Naturally the King asked about David. After talking to him, King Saul took him to the palace as his courtier.

### STUDY GROUP 2—DAVID, AS A COURTIER

#### a. What were David's responsibilities as a courtier? (1 Samuel 18:5; 10b)

David became a soldier. Because he always won his battles, Saul made him commander of his army.

David also played on his lyre (a harp) and sang to King Saul. His music relaxed the king when he was sad or very angry.

#### b. How successful was David as commander of the king's soldiers? (1 Samuel 18:30)

David was more successful than any other soldiers and everyone respected him.

#### c. What happened as a result of his good fortune? (1 Samuel 18:12; 19:1)

King Saul became jealous of David. He was afraid of David's popularity and wanted to kill him.

#### d. Who helped David escape and why? (1 Samuel 20:12-30)

Jonathan, King Saul's son, loved David as a brother. He kept David informed and warned him to escape from the kingdom when the danger became too great.

### STUDY GROUP 3—DAVID, AS AN OUTLAW

#### a. As an outlaw, David has seven narrow escapes. There isn't time to study each but you can mention this fact when you give your report. 1 Samuel 23:6-14

tells the story of one of these escapes.

Where was he?

David was in a place called Keilah (Ke-i'la)

Why was he in danger?

David knew King Saul was near. He felt that he couldn't count on the people of Keilah to hide him. What did he do? He prayed about it. God assured him that there was real danger and that he should leave. When King Saul arrived in Keilah, David was safe in the hill country.

b. **Twice David had the opportunity to kill King Saul. This should be mentioned when you report. Read 1 Samuel 24:1-7.**

**What happened that would make it possible for David to kill the king?**

King Saul and David were both in the wilderness of Engedi (en-gedi). Saul was tired and went into a cave to rest. He didn't know that David and his men were hiding in the same cave. When David came out, he found King Saul asleep.

c. **Why didn't David kill King Saul?**

King Saul had been anointed king by God. Therefore, David felt that he had no right to alter God's plan.

#### STUDY GROUP 4—DAVID, AS KING OF JUDAH

a. **What did David do when he received the news that King Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle? (1 Samuel 1:11, 12)**

David was very sad. He mourned, he cried, and fasted.

b. **How did David become king of Judah? (2 Samuel 2:1-4)**

In Hebron, some of the men of Judah came to David and anointed him king.

c. **What was the first thing David did as king? (2 Samuel 2:4b-6)**

King David sent a thank-you letter to the people of Jabesh-gilead. He was grateful to them because they had given King Saul a proper burial.

d. **What problem did David have as King of Judah? (2 Samuel 2:8-11)**

King David found that some of the people wanted Saul's son to be the next king. David had to fight a civil war.

e. **How was this problem solved? (2 Samuel 3:1; 5:1, 2)**

There was a long war, but David grew stronger. Finally all the tribes of Israel came to Hebron to make David their king.

#### STUDY GROUP 5—DAVID, AS KING OF ALL ISRAEL

a. **Why was David considered a good king by his people? (2 Samuel 8:15)**

He was fair with everyone and treated all people the same.

b. **What great sin did David commit? (1 Samuel 11:2-5)**

David stole Bathsheba, the wife of one of his officers. He broke the sixth Commandment. Now Bathsheba was going to have a child and King David was its father.

c. **How did King David try to cover up his sin? (2 Samuel 11:14, 15)**

King David had Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, put into the thick of battle where he would be killed. Then he married Bathsheba.

d. **Why was David unable to hide his sin? (2 Samuel 11:26, 27; 12:1)**

God knew what David had done because God knows all things. He sent the prophet Nathan to remind David of this.

e. **What punishment did David have to take for his sin? (2 Samuel 12: 13, 14 and 2 Samuel 15:1-6)**

The son born to David and Bathsheba died.

Absalom, King David's own son, stole the love of the people from him.



King David was faced with a revolt. *(The leader should point out that Absalom is King David's own son because the reference does not give this information.)*

## REASSEMBLE THE GROUPS

*(The reporters from each group will be called on in turn by the leader. The leader may summarize as follows after the report is given.)*

David was an outstanding person all through his life. As a boy, he killed the giant everyone feared. As a courtier, David became commander of all the king's soldiers. As an outlaw, he remembered that although King Saul was *his* enemy he was *the Lord's* anointed. King David is well known as Israel's *greatest* king. What can we learn from this great character?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*(The leader may direct these questions to the entire group. The answers given are merely a guide.)*

1. From the first part of the life of David we noticed that he was chosen by God to be the next King because of what God saw in his heart.

- a. What does this mean?

God looked to see what David was really like. God noticed his character and his personality.

- b. How do we choose our leaders, or even our friends?

We often consider clothes, looks, race, popularity, etc., as the important things.

2. In Part II of the life of David we observed that David became an outlaw because King Saul was jealous of him.

- a. Why was King Saul jealous?

He felt David was so popular that the people might want him as their king.

- b. Was David planning to take the throne from King Saul?

No. David knew God planned that he would be king only after King Saul died.

- c. Jealousy is often described as a "green-eyed monster." Can you understand why?

It makes people unhappy, e.g., King Saul; it makes you feel like hurting someone and yet jealousy never accomplishes anything worthwhile. An innocent person often suffers, e.g., David.

3. David had seven narrow escapes and only two opportunities to kill the king.

- a. How do you think David felt when he found the king asleep?

He probably remembered all the hardships the King was causing him. He probably hated him for the moment.

- b. Would you have allowed the king to go unharmed?

It would take real character to turn your back on your enemy. David could have said "God delivered him into my hands."

4. Does it surprise you that a great man like King David broke the sixth Commandment? We often forget that Bible characters were human. Let's turn to the first two verses of the chapter 11 of 2 Samuel. As I read, find the answer to the question: Why did King David sin?

- a. He was idle when he should have been fighting. Remember the saying "Idleness is the devil's workshop."

- b. Probably King David saw no particular need for further battle. He had been very successful. His kingdom was well established. He had plenty of riches. Perhaps he decided to stay home and enjoy his favorite position. Trusting in

his own wealth he forgot God and therefore was not strong enough to overcome temptation.

5. King David tried to cover up his sin. Have you ever tried that?

Have you ever done it successfully? Why can't we hide?

God sees all, hears all and knows all. Besides down deep we know our sins will be punished.

### LEADER

King David took his punishment "like a king." God forgave him because he truly was sorry and he gave David and Bathsheba another son, whom they called Solomon.

Our last glimpse of King David is in 2 Kings 2:23. On his death bed he speaks to his son Solomon soon to be the next king. "Be strong and show yourself a man and keep the charge of Lord your God, walking in his way and keeping his statutes and his commandments . . ." These words of advice show full confidence in God.

In spite of his sin David is certainly one of the greatest Old Testament characters.

What made David the man he was? In other words what made him tick? Perhaps our answer is found in 1 Samuel 13:13, 14. (*Read aloud by leader*) He was a man after God's own heart.

What does it mean to be "a man after God's own heart?" (*One who trusts God; one who tries to do God's will; one who puts God first in his life.*)

Since this is the clue to our understanding of David, we could say that "David . . . a man after God's own heart" would be a fitting title to the story of the life of David. A true story, unusual and challenging, to recommend to your best friend!

(*This title will then be added to the outline, either on the blackboard, cardboard, shelf paper, etc.*)

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

Purpose of this Bible Study: (1) To outline the life of David. (2) To discover what made David tick. (3) To learn from David's life those things which would be helpful to the intermediate in his daily life.

Another Method: Choose five intermediates to prepare the questions ahead of time and tell the story of the part of the life of David assigned to each.

### QUIZ FOR EARLY ARRIVALS

True or False (all statements true except 2 and 7).

1. David played a lyre.
2. Even as a shepherd David looked more like a king than any of his brothers.
3. David's great-grandparents were Boaz and Ruth.
4. David was anointed king in Bethlehem.
5. Israel's most deadly enemy at the time was the Philistine nation.
6. The crowds sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands; David his ten thousands."
7. Jonathan, the son of King Saul, was jealous of David.
8. David was 30 years old when he began to reign as King of Israel.
9. Nathan was the prophet of the Lord during David's reign.
10. David's son Absalom tried to take his crown from him.

### WORSHIP HELPS

PSALM 32:1-5 (one of David's Psalms of repentance)

THE OFFERTORY (Psalm 51:10-12—the prayer request of David and all sinners)

GLORIA PATRI (reminds us that we have a great advantage. Jesus is our friend, our guide and our Saviour)

PRAYER HYMN—"I Need Thee Precious Jesus" (prayed out of our need for Jesus as our Lord and Saviour)



# Echoes

You will notice as you leaf through these pages—or if you like to count the topics listed in the index—that there are 12 topics this issue rather than the usual 13. We're not superstitious!

We like to know that our Luther Leaguers are creative. Sometimes we have to use force—such as being a topic short. This lack of a printed topic makes you put on your thinking cap and get to work.

We're not too hard on you. We'll help you along by giving suggestions. If you haven't already discovered this fact, we will tell you in simple words: Several of these topics can be cut up and used for two or more meetings.

## DOUBLING TOPICS

For instance, "The ULCA Helps Those with Needs," page 8, is a long topic. If you gather extra material as suggested in the topic helps you can rewrite parts of it so that it will cover two meetings. Or you may want to cover the topic in one evening and as another session visit an institution near you or plan some type of project.

"Observe Advent with a Wreath," page 26, is planned for more than one meeting. Talking about the history of the Advent wreath and initial plans will consume one meeting while the carrying out of those plans will make another meeting zip by.

The Bible study concerning David—"Shepherd Makes Good"—page 42, very easily could stretch out over several meetings. In fact, your study would be much more profitable if you did give more time to it.

If you like making study trips in connection with topics you can take off for a Roman Catholic church after you have had the topic on Catholicism, page 20.

## ANGELS

I suppose by now you know that you can't—or shouldn't—present topics word for word as they are. You have to remodel them. One that can be remodeled is

"Angel Voices Ever Singing," page 2.

September 29 is on a Tuesday. This is the date of the Festival of St. Michael and All the Angels about which this topic speaks. You could schedule this topic for the Sunday before or the Sunday afterward.

Angels are mentioned a good bit around the Christmas season. You may want to use the topic at this time and add some Christmas references and information.

## CATHOLICISM

As mentioned in the Presentation Pointers for the topic about Catholicism, your pastor should be in on the preparation of the topic. In addition to the basic differences mentioned in the body of the topic, something should be said about Justification by Faith and the Priesthood of all Believers.

## DATING

If you're from the South your winter dating may not vary too much from your summer dating (remember we had a topic on that subject in a former issue). You'll have to use another topic in place of this one. Check the HIGH IDEALS index for other topics on dating.

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

The topic on page 38, "The Second Coming," is excellent material for an Advent retreat if your league has one—or for use in cell groups. (Do you have the LLA guide for cells?)

Our Christmas topic is different this year. It's about family participation in the celebration of Christ's birth. We have given you no topic about the Christmas story. One can be dug up from a past HIGH IDEALS or *Luther Life*.

## FAMILY NIGHT

We have good material for two family nights in this issue. "The Family Faces a Jury," page 35, is just the thing for a family get-together. Suggestions are given with the topic.

The topic about Christmas in the family, page 32, should be presented to the family group also. This topic has its value in the resultant action.



# THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA

2900 QUEEN LANE PHILADELPHIA 29, PENNSYLVANIA

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*Thus says the Lord:*

*“Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool;  
what is the house which you would build for me,  
and what is the place of my rest?  
All these things my hand has made,  
And so all these things are mine, says the Lord.*

*But this is the man to whom I will look,  
He that is humble and contrite in spirit,  
And trembles at my word.”*

ISAIAH 66:1, 2